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D.D.

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PRINCIPAL OF THE CHILDREN'S HOME AND ORPHANAGE

Author of "The Hymn-Book of the Modern Church," &c.

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OF

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IN THEIR HISTORICAL SUCCESSION

BY

GEORGE G. FINDLAY, D.D.

TUTOR IN N.T. LITERATURE AND CLASSICS,
HEADINGLEY COLLEGE

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Exemplum accipite, fratres, laboris et patientiae Prophetas, qui locuti sunt in nomine Domini. . . . In eis Spiritus Christi praenunciabit eas quae in Christo sunt passiones, et posteriores glorias.

St James and St Peter.

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[1] The dates here set down are based on those of the Cambridge *Companion to the Bible.* Occasional variations from these may occur in the sequel.

THE BOOKS OF THE PROPHETS

THE CHALDÆAN AGE

CHAPTER XX

THE REIGN OF JOSIAH

Interval of Judæan Independence—Josiah's Minority—Younger Generation surrounding Josiah—Collapse of Assyrian Power—Publication of Deuteronomy—Union of Priestly and Prophetic Spirit—Political Failure of Deuteronomic Movement—2 Chronicles on Josiah—Finding of the Law-book—Abolition of the High Places—Jerusalem monopolizes Worship—Excellence of Josiah's Administration—Conflict with Pharaoh-Necho—Josiah's Death.

CHAPTERS XX and XXI belong to the interregnum of twenty years or more previous to 608 B.C., which separated the Chaldæan from the Assyrian domination in Palestine. Neither the king Josiah nor the prophet Zephaniah comes into collision with the Chaldæan power;

but the events of their time were making for its rise, and the crisis then took place in the history of Judah which was to receive its solution at the hands of Nebuchadrezzar. By the year 625 Assyria's suzerainty in the west-lands, declining since her expulsion from Egypt (Vol. II, p. 180), was completely lost; the Chaldæan ascendency began with the victory of Nebuchadrezzar over Pharaoh-Necho at Carchemish in 605. Meanwhile, until the invasion of the Egyptians in 608 B.C., Palestine was free from foreign overlordship. The interlude between the Ninevite and Babylonian suzerainty nearly coincides with the reign of Josiah (Yo'shiyyahu) in Judah, 640 (or 639)–608. On many accounts, Josiah's reign was a juncture of peculiar importance in the history of Israelite religion. The review of this critical epoch will introduce the inquiry into the course of Prophecy during the Chaldæan Age, which forms the next principal section of our work (see Vol. I, pp. 74, 75).

Josiah came to the throne as a child of eight years. The circumstances of his accession were anything but propitious. His father Amon, after a rule of two years modelled on the evil example of Manasseh, had fallen a victim to some court conspiracy, which the country people avenged on the murderers, crowning his little

son Josiah in his place (2 Kings 21 19-26). Who held the regency, we are not told. Under the given circumstances one would suppose the boy king to have been brought up in the tutelage of the heathen party, so long dominant in Judah. Happily he found instructors of the opposite character, and rose entirely above the evil surroundings of his youth. Josiah must have possessed uncommon decision of character and force of will to have reversed so completely the national course, under the extreme disadvantage of his elevation to the throne in childhood. His religious choice was early made, and made itself effective: the Book of Kings (2 Kings 22 1. 2) records that "he did that which was right in the eyes of Jehovah, and walked in all the ways of David his father, and turned not aside to the right hand or to the left." That a prince of this pure and lofty nature should be formed in so corrupt a court is a singular occurrence. We can best account for this by supposing that the child had imbibed his devotion to the old faith from some domestic source, determining the direction of his mind from infancy. Was his mother Yedidah (2 Kings 22 1) his religious teacher? or is it possible that *Huldah* (*Chuldah*), "the prophetess" whom the deputation from the king went to consult on

the discovery of the Law-book in the temple (2 Kings 22 14), had served as Josiah's nurse or foster-mother, and had formed the child's mind during his tender years? This would explain her unique prestige in Jerusalem at this time and the decisive part she played in the revolution of 621. Zephaniah and Jeremiah were both of them prophets of repute at this latter date, and belonged probably to the royal entourage; but they were both, we suppose, young prophets (see pp. 37, 183); while Huldah had an influence over the king of which we know no other example, of her sex, in the relations of Israelite prophecy to royalty. Her position as "the royal seer" becomes natural on the conjecture that this inspired woman had been Josiah's preceptress in childhood and was his spiritual mother. Through such channels the purest influences of faith have not unfrequently been transmitted in evil times.[1]

The young king did not, however, stand alone in his zeal for Jehovah. He represented a new generation, in which the better spirit of Israel powerfully reacted against the oppression and

[1] The history of the late Earl of Shaftesbury, who traced his decisive religious impressions, received in childhood, to the influence of a pious maidservant in his father's house, illustrates what is here said.

degradation it had suffered for the last sixty years. His personal abilities were of an unusual order, and he had powers of attraction which reminded men of David as they watched his career; he became the darling of the people, and no death in Israel was ever mourned like Josiah's (see 2 Chron. 35 24. 25; Zech. 12 10. 11). But all this would not have enabled Josiah to effect his drastic reforms, had there not been a genuine sympathy with his religious aims evoked in the nation, and had there not been a body of ready and capable helpers forthcoming from amongst the ruling classes. Such a coadjutor, and prompter, the king had in Hilkiah, the chief priest of the temple (*Chilqiyyahu*: a different person from Hilkiah the father of the prophet Jeremiah, Jer. 1 1), who discovered there the hidden "book of the law"; his assistance was indispensable for the work to be done. "Shaphan the scribe" (2 Kings 22 10), or Secretary of State, and his son Ahikam (*'Achiqam*), who with others of the family proved staunch friends to Jeremiah in later days, were of the same party, to which we may safely add the names of 'Akbor and 'Asayah, who accompanied these two in the deputation sent to Huldah by the king, but are otherwise unknown (ver. 14). While this group of men supplied Josiah's executive, Jeremiah

was one of a band of prophets who preached a return to "the old way" in city and country: the written prophecies of Jeremiah bear traces of a mission of this kind (see 11 1–8; and comp. pp. 187–191 below); and the numerous mercenary prophets of Jehovah, with whom Jeremiah contends under Josiah's sons, are evidence of the fact that orthodox prophecy had revived and flourished in this king's reign and Jehovism was again the popular creed.

The national revulsion against idolatry, which made the acceptance of the Deuteronomic covenant possible, had at the same time powerful external incentives. The breakdown of the Assyrian empire, on subservience to which Manasseh's policy was based, and the terrible menace of the Scythian invasion whose lesson Zephaniah and Jeremiah powerfully enforced, had produced an effect resembling that wrought a century earlier by the fall of Samaria and the Assyrian terror, under the preaching of Isaiah and Micah. These events destroyed the credit of the newly imported idolatries, and drove the people to seek the face of their own affronted Jehovah. Moreover, by the year 621 the success of Josiah's energetic rule—the restoration of the national liberty which had been forfeited for a century past, and the extension of Judæan

authority over the country of the Ten Tribes (see 2 Kings 23 15-20)—gave decisive proof of Jehovah's favour toward this exemplary king and set an unmistakable seal upon the constitution he proclaimed. Isaiah's predictions of the blessings assured for repentant Israel under a righteous king seemed at last on the point of fulfilment, and Israel, delivered once more from the yoke of the heathen, was to enter upon her destined heritage. That the Scythian scourge, before which the nation had crouched in terror (see Chap. XXI), passed over Israel so lightly, while it fell heavily on the heathen around her, was an earnest of "the sure mercies of David" that would be given to the son and the people of David on returning to his ways. The political situation enforced the Torah adopted by Josiah with an effect that bore down all resistance.

But the outward pressure and force of circumstances acting on the popular mind, unattended by any deep spiritual change, brought about a formal and nominal rather than a real conversion of the Judæan people. The reaction that ensued on Josiah's tragic death showed that the seed of the word had, for that generation, been sown in shallow and stony ground, where it "sprang up quickly, because it had no depth of earth." Yet Josiah's work was not in vain. The

Deuteronomic code[1] remained in force; the Book of the Law was held fast in the hands of the people. Jeremiah's chief complaint in subsequent times was not that Jehovah's altars were abandoned, but that zeal for His temple was combined with disregard of His moral requirements and of His living prophetic oracles. With the birth of Scripture Pharisaism took its rise. Notwithstanding, the written word remained, henceforth imperishable, to be a seed of life for all generations.

The spiritual forces of the nation had rallied round the youthful king. They made a supreme

[1] We cannot enter into the vexed question of the authorship and literary history of Deuteronomy. It is admitted, almost everywhere, that "the book of the law" or "the book of the covenant," referred to in 2 Kings 22 10. 11 and 23 2. 3. 24, was not the whole Pentateuch, but the roll of Deuteronomy, possibly in a shorter early recension containing the substance of chs. 5–26. This is proved by the close correspondence of the laws and exhortations of Deuteronomy with the impression that the discovered book produced and with the measures of reform carried out by Josiah, as these are described in 2 Kings 22, 23—a correspondence marked both in what Deuteronomy and 2 Kings severally contain, and in what they do not contain. The subject is treated learnedly and dispassionately in Dr Driver's *Introduction* to his volume on Deuteronomy in the *International Critical Commentary*, as also in the article on the same subject in Smith's *Dictionary of the Bible* (ed. 2), by Prof. A. Harper in the *Expositor's Bible* (Deuteronomy), and by Dr H. E. Ryle in Hastings' *D.B.*

effort to save the religion and state of Israel; and this took shape in the publication of the Book of Deuteronomy, which formed, as it is now generally thought, the nucleus of the collection of Old Testament Scriptures. The year 621 B.C. is amongst the most memorable in history; for in this year the foundations of the Bible were laid, and the religion of Israel became *a book-religion*. The matter of the law, we presume, existed in oral tradition, and in written form, long before this time; but hitherto, so far as we can trace, in scattered and more private collections belonging to priestly corporations or prophetic schools, while the people sought instruction in Divine things from the mouth of priest or prophet (see Deut. 17 18 18 14-18, Jer. 2 8 5 31 18 18, Am. 3 7, Mal. 2 4-7). But when Josiah "read in the ears" of the people gathered in Jerusalem "all the words of the book of the covenant which was found in the house of Jehovah," and bound the hearers, along with himself, to this document, the covenant thus accepted and canonized became in its published form the standard and charter of the nation's life, and *Scripture* was instituted. The Josianic reformers of the seventh century before Christ did what the Lutheran reformers of the sixteenth century after Christ repeated: they gave the

Bible to the common people; they took it out of the priests' hands, who had abused it for their own gain (Mic. 3 11, Jer. 6 13, Zeph. 3 4, etc.). With this treasure in possession the Judæans went into exile, and "the book" proved their safeguard; it was "the sanctuary of Jehovah" to them (as the Rabbis afterwards called the Bible), taking the place of temple and of city and keeping alive the sacred memories of the homeland and the grand hope of Israel. The Scripture, first in narrower and afterwards in wider compass, furnished in its "lessons" ("readings") the incentive and subject-matter for the little gatherings formed wherever a Jewish colony was settled, by which the Dispersion have maintained their faith and worship in alien lands to this hour. Scripture and the Synagogue are correlative institutions, the latter in truth the child of the former. With the idea once started and the nucleus supplied, Scripture soon grew to larger proportions. Much of its material was already to hand. The Exile, as we hope to show in the last volume of this work, was a great occasion for sifting and compiling Israelite sacred literature.

Deuteronomy admirably combines *the prophetic* with *the priestly* spirit. It is true, therefore, to the character of Moses, who was priestly legislator and inspired prophet in one person.

Deuteronomy is the law of Moses in its broad principles, preached to the times and baptized into the spirit of prophecy. A cold repetition of legal formulæ, or a mere verbal echo of discourses of the Founder uttered eight centuries before, could never have served the purpose, nor seized the conscience of king and people as this book manifestly did, coming fresh from "the mouth" of the living God. Like our Lord's Sermon on the Mount, Deuteronomy was the law of Israel re-edited and revivified, its old "letter"—the acknowledged word of Moses—raised from the dust, refurbished and proclaimed anew in the freedom of the Spirit that giveth life.

Still it was *the law*, not the gospel, which this epoch-making book conveyed. Deuteronomy appears to represent the final effort of the prophetic order of earlier times, in union with the loyal priesthood, to save the existing nation by re-enforcing the Mosaic covenant, promulgated in a style suited to the age and embodied in a writing that should be known and read of all men. To this document the nation is solemnly pledged, under the authority of the devoted and popular king whom Jehovah had in His mercy given to Israel. The discovery of the book was a providential coincidence. The attempt to enforce it was boldly designed and ably executed.

So long as Josiah lived, it appeared successful; in its ultimate effect this great book, the fruit in reality of the best work of many generations, was indeed successful beyond calculation. But politically, and in its spiritual impression on the existing people (see Chap. xxv), it proved a failure. The Judæan civil state was beyond redemption (see Jer. 7 15. 16, etc.). Moral decay and enfeeblement of the national fibre had advanced continually since Isaiah's time; "the remnant" on which the earlier prophet relied was attenuated to the last degree. The heroic character and leadership of Josiah, acting at a juncture when the nation was temporarily released from the pressure of the surrounding heathen empires, gave a semblance of restored vigour to the little state which disappeared with his defeat and death, when the people fell back into religious confusion and social disorder. Josiah's sons and grandsons, set up one after the other by Egypt or Babylon, in varying fashion "did that which was evil in the sight of Jehovah." Their folly and incapacity accelerated the inevitable ruin; they reflected truly enough the divided heart and fickle temper of the nation they ruled. Amongst the professed orthodox Jeremiah found himself confronted by a new legalism based on the letter

of Deuteronomy, which was worse than that exposed by Isaiah ; single-handed, he opposed the body of the priests and prophets, who claimed to be the exponents of Jehovah's law and maintained the inviolability of Zion (Vol. I, pp. 296–297), serving themselves heirs to Isaiah by the canting repetition of his watchwords. The hopes so fondly built for a time on the work of Josiah and the national covenant of 621 thus came to naught. This tragic failure is the burden of the Book of Jeremiah (see Chaps. XXIV, XXV).

In 2 Chron. 34 1-7 we are given to understand that Josiah's reformation commenced earlier than is indicated in 2 Kings 22 : " For in the eighth year of his [Josiah's] reign, while he was yet young [*scil.* at the age of 15], he began to seek after the God of David his father; and in the twelfth year he began to purge Judah and Jerusalem, etc." These data are definite, and intrinsically probable ; we accept them with confidence, notwithstanding the distrust of critics for statements of Chronicles unsupported by the Book of Kings. Granting that Josiah's career was marked by the perfect loyalty to Jehovah set forth in both narratives, one cannot think that he took no spontaneous measures for the reform of religion of his own accord, nor until such action was pressed upon him by the discovery

of Deuteronomy in his twenty-seventh year. Long before this the king had come of age, and would be bound to declare himself; and with his high spirit and capacity for action, it is difficult to suppose that he did nothing to suppress idolatry until the crisis related in 2 Kings. The writer of this latter narrative would hardly have made Josiah such a paragon, had he imagined that the King remained for many years of responsibility acquiescent in the condition of things so unsparingly condemned by Zephaniah (see Chap. XXI). "The twelfth year" of Josiah's reign was 629–8—probably the date when his actual rule began (in the "eighth year" already, according to the Chronicler, he had given proof of his faith): then "he began to purge Judah and Jerusalem." Now this was just one year before Jeremiah's call (Jer. 1 1); and, as will appear in Chap. XXI (see pp. 32–33), this beginning of reform followed on the delivery of Zephaniah's oracles and the panic created by the rumours of the Scythian hordes approaching. These events followed in close and natural sequence. The Chronicler may have somewhat anticipated the course of things by ascribing to Josiah's initial proceedings some of the results of later action, but he is surely in the main correct: the king lost no time in declaring himself on Jehovah's

side, and set himself early to his life's task; he accepted Zephaniah's warning. The way was paved for the sweeping revolution of the year 621 by previous legislation on public worship commencing from Josiah's assumption of actual royalty.

The lost Book of the Law was brought to light in the course of repairs of the temple-structure, which Hilkiah was executing under Josiah's orders (2 Kings 22). This shows that the king and the temple authorities were already busy in rectifying matters of worship. "The breaches" in Jehovah's house, referred to in 2 Kings 22 5, may well have been due to the removal of the foreign gods, with their shrines and accessory buildings, which had been intruded there in the two previous reigns, rather than to neglect of the fabric; and ver. 4 of 2 Kings 23, describing Josiah's cleansing of the temple, gives upon this supposition a summary statement of what took place partly (as intimated in 2 Chron.) before the finding of the Book of the Law and partly after that event. The attention of the reader of Kings is fixed upon the critical event of Josiah's reign, viz. the adoption of the national covenant-book; the Chronicler seeks rather to interest us in Josiah himself, in the progress of his godly work and the exhibition of his exemplary piety.

Stress is laid by both accounts on the fact that Josiah abolished "the" sacred "high places," as this was enjoined by Deuteronomy. The Chronicler (2 Chron. 31 1) credits *Hezekiah* with a similar act of destruction; but this earlier edict must have been partial, and temporary in effect; it may have been aimed only at the High Places that had lapsed into heathenism. These "high places" filled an important part in the religion of Palestine; they were the immemorial seats of local worship throughout the country—the hill-tops where Canaanite shrines had stood, and where the Israelites on entering the land set up in turn Jehovah's altars. We find Samuel and others of the earlier religious leaders worshipping at these village sanctuaries, without misgiving or rebuke. But in course of time as the Israelites mingled with the older population, wherever religious strictness declined, the local superstitions and idolatrous associations of the high places tended to reassert themselves (comp., in the opposite sense, the history told in 2 Kings 17 24-33). While the cultus remained nominally Jehovistic, heathen rites and symbols thus became attached thereto. This was a chief cause, indigenous to the soil, of the corruption of Jehovism by Ba'alism that had destroyed the northern kingdom of Israel; and it operated as

a constant danger in outlying Judæan districts. The mischiefs infesting the local shrines were incurable; no remedy was left but a sweeping destruction, all public worship and sacrifice to Jehovah being concentrated in Jerusalem and the country priests being transferred, as Levites, to the service of the Jerusalem temple. This measure was feasible in the narrow territory of Judæa; but it did violence to much innocent religious feeling and local patriotism, and involved much heart-burning and hardship (comp. pp. 106-108). The desecration of "the high places" was the most difficult and disturbing of Josiah's reforms; it was a veritable revolution.

Such effacement of the ancient rural shrines had become possible in virtue of the predominance which had accrued in course of time to the city and temple of David through the long and illustrious line of Zion's kings and prophets, whose work has gained for "the city" and "house of Jehovah" their incomparable sanctity. The teaching of Isaiah and the deliverance of Jerusalem from Sennacherib contributed most of all to this result. Curiously enough, the cultus of the High Places has revived under later creeds; the heights of Palestine are now crowned with the monuments of Muhammadan saints, to which pilgrimage is made and where vows are

offered. The practice seems to be rooted in the soil. Under the Deuteronomic code, Jerusalem monopolized all sacredness of place; and "the mountain of the house of Jehovah is established in the top of the mountains and exalted above the hills." The significance of Jerusalem and the temple had reached their highest point; the theocratic national life concentrated itself at this site, where it was soon to receive a mortal blow, which served in the end to liberate its higher spirit for universal service to mankind.

Thirteen years longer Josiah reigned in peace and honour. To this period Jeremiah looked back from the unhappy times which followed, as to halcyon days; he rebukes Jehoiakim with the words, "Did not thy father eat and drink, and do judgement and justice? then things went well with him. He judged the cause of the poor and needy; then things went well. Was not this to know Me? saith Jehovah" (22 15. 16; comp. Mic. 6 8, Isa. 1 16. 17). His religious zeal took effect in righteous and firm government; his people enjoyed that impartial administration of justice which is so rare in the East, and is the greatest of social blessings. On this account Josiah is extolled above all Israelite rulers in the sacred narrative: "Like unto him there was no king before him, that turned unto Jehovah with all

his heart, and with all his soul, and with all his might, according to all the law of Moses" (comp. Deut. 6 5); "neither after him arose there any other like him" (2 Kings 23 25). He attained the ideal of David's dying song (2 Sam. 23 3. 4):

One that ruleth over men righteously, that ruleth in the fear of God;
He shall be as the light of the morning when the sun ariseth,—a morning without clouds;
When the tender grass springeth out of the earth, through the clear shining after rain.

Such a burst of unlooked-for sunshine, such a dayspring of fresh hope, the reign of Josiah brought to his people, reviving the promise of the Messianic kingdom and the perfect Son of David, with whom Josiah would have been more distinctly associated in the prophetic mind but for his premature and disastrous end (see, however, Zechariah 13 7-9, and (pp. 86-87 below). Alas! Josiah's rule, instead of proving the dawn of a fair spring morning when the winter rains are past, was only a rift in the clouds, a delusive interval of brightness in the wild sunset of Israel's day, a lull of the storm that would soon end in the wreck of the Judæan state and the Davidic dynasty.

The withdrawal of Assyrian rule, which seems to have followed on the Scythian raids, had given

Josiah opportunity to annex, in part at least, the old northern territory of Israel—the entire kingdom of David was his by hereditary right. Accordingly we find him "destroying the altar that was at Bethel" and "the high place" set up by Jeroboam; he "took away all the houses [shrines] of the high places that were in the cities of Samaria, which the kings of Israel had made to provoke Jehovah to anger," at which, as appears from 2 Kings 17 24-33, a kind of hybrid or bastard cult of Jehovah had been restored under the patronage of the king of Assyria; and he "slew all the priests of the high places that were there, upon the altars, and burned men's bones upon them" (2 Kings 23 15-20). This was an interference on Josiah's part, such as could only be committed with impunity because for the time Judah was the strongest power in Palestine, and he was in a position to reassert the long-forfeited sovereignty of David and Solomon over the Samarian districts.

Hence when Pharaoh-Necho, in the year 608, marched northwards—the first time for ages that an Egyptian army had traversed Palestine—to secure Syria and to vindicate his share in the partition of the Assyrian empire, Josiah treated this as an invasion of his own domain and a violation of Jehovah's territory, and he flung

himself across Necho's path at Megiddo. From the singular account given in 2 Chron. 35 20-22, it appears that Josiah put himself in the wrong and acted a fanatical part. Necho had avoided meddling with Judæan affairs and infringing upon the Judæan boundary ;[1] he did his best to spare Josiah the unequal combat, and to husband his own forces for other use : "He sent ambassadors to him, saying, What have I to do with thee, thou king of *Judah*? [a rebuke to Josiah for overstepping his province]. I come not against thee, but against the house wherewith I have war [presumably, the house of Assyria, for Nineveh was still standing] ; and God hath commanded me to make haste. Forbear thee from *meddling with God*, who is with me, that He destroy thee not." Whether this lifelike speech be literally authentic or not, it seems to express the judgement of later times and to signify that Josiah in this momentous step acted with a rash bravery and "tempted Jehovah his God"; he had come athwart the Divine purposes, and paid the penalty. This was the first great error of a blameless and noble career; but it was fatal.

[1] This makes it likely that Necho carried his troops by sea to the plain of Esdraelon, instead of marching them across the desert and along the coast.

So this *preux chevalier* of Jerusalem brought his own life to a melancholy end, and with it brought down at a stroke the edifice he had reared with efforts so strenuous, so single-minded, and for the time so successful. In all likelihood, the king was impelled to the encounter with Egypt by the popular prophets whom Jeremiah had later to combat ; if any true prophet (except the Pharaoh) gave him warning, there is no record of the fact.

CHAPTER XXI

THE APOCALYPSE OF ZEPHANIAH

Zephaniah and Nahum—Date of Zephaniah—Connexion with Josiah's Reformation—The Coming Day of Jehovah—Horror of the Scythian Invasion—Judah's Escape—Causes of Reprieve—Zephaniah compared with Isaiah and Jeremiah—A Prophet of Jerusalem—Relations with the Royal House—Personality of Zephaniah—Integrity of the Book—Suggested Interpolations—Analysis of the Book.

THE prophet Zephaniah was a contemporary of Nahum (Vol II, Chap. XIX); the two are linked by the words of Zeph. 2 13-15. The last sentence of this oracle on Nineveh—"Every one that passes by her hisses, wags his head"—is an echo of Nahum's conclusion (3 19). But there is this difference, that while the coming fall of Nineveh fills the whole soul of Nahum and is the one thought that inspires him, to Zephaniah it forms a subordinate and incidental topic; he views "Asshur" along with "Cush" as distant heathen powers which Jehovah will destroy in the

awful judgement sweeping over the earth, while Philistia, occupying the immediate foreground, is conspicuous in his landscape of desolation. Assyria still exists, but she has ceased to dominate the horizon; her "yoke" no longer rests on Judah's shoulder (contrast Nahum 1 13.15). For this reason we judge Zephaniah's prophecy to be the later of the two, though perhaps only a little later, considering how rapidly the Ninevite power declined. He wrote during the last fifteen years of Nineveh's history, subsequent to the first Median invasion of her territory under Phraortes, after which Assyria maintained a limited and precarious dominion.

The situation of Zephaniah is further indicated by the picture given in ch. 1 4-6. 8-12 of the state of Jerusalem. Some points in his description are obscure; but the language of vv. 4 and 5 shows the strange mixture of idolatries, local and imperial, which had prevailed under king Manasseh, to be still in existence; it continues side by side with the public worship of Jehovah. This requires a date either early in Josiah's reign, before his great reforms, or in the time of this king's apostate sons. The denunciation of Nineveh, above quoted, decides us for the former of these epochs, since the death of Josiah and the fall of Nineveh all but coincided

(608–607 B.C.) In ver. 8 "the princes" and "the king's sons" ("king's house" in the LXX: a preferable reading, or a correct paraphrase) are denounced as ringleaders in evil, and with them are associated "all such as are clothed with foreign apparel"—the followers of heathen fashions; but no reflexion is made on *the king*: this observation points us again to the time of Josiah's minority, when power was in the hands of the king's elder relatives who represented the old régime, while the character of Josiah had not as yet asserted itself. The allusion of ver. 11 to the "merchant people" (lit. "people of Canaan"; comp. Hos. 12 7, R.V. *margin*) as prominent in Jerusalem, and those "laden with silver" (see also ver. 18), suits a time following the long peace under Manasseh and before the Scythian raids, when Jerusalem had risen to commercial prosperity and recovered the wealth lost in Sennacherib's invasion. This criterion agrees with those already noted.

The little Book of Zephaniah is therefore one of the most precisely dated in Israelite prophecy. In the opinion of nearly all critics, it was written shortly before Josiah's reformation, when the evils that flourished under Manasseh and Amon were still rampant, but the true faith of Israel had found its voice once more and

the revival which culminated in Josiah's drastic reforms had already begun. This gives us 630 B.C. as the approximate date for Zephaniah—some five years only after that assigned to Nahum (Vol. II, pp. 184-186), and nearly coincident with the year of Jeremiah's first public appearance (Jer. 1 2). These three preachers of righteousness came forward almost simultaneously; the early years of Josiah were marked by a renascence of the spirit of prophecy that had been repressed for half a century under the fierce heathenish rule of Manasseh. The importance of this crisis has been shown in our last chapter.

Josiah ascended the throne, a child of eight years (2 Kings 22 1), in 640 B.C.; in the eighteenth year of his reign the famous discovery was made in the temple of "the book of the law" (vv. 3-13); but six years before this (2 Chron. 34 3 ff.; see pp. 13-15) the young king, about the time of his coming of age, "began to purge Judah and Jerusalem from the high places," etc. Josiah's reformation was therefore set on foot within two or three years of the publication of Zephaniah's prophecy; and the inference *post hoc ergo propter hoc* is more than commonly plausible.

By the year 630 Nineveh had lost her imperial position. A new power is mounting the horizon, on which Zephaniah's fearful gaze is fixed; in

its approach he foresees overwhelming distress, it may be irretrievable ruin, for the whole of Israel's world. "The great day of Jehovah is near," he cries—"a day of wrath, a day of trouble and distress, a day of wasting and desolation, a day of darkness and gloominess, a day of clouds and thick darkness" (1 15). So this prophet tolls the knell of doom for the nations; he strikes the iron note that was taken up in the thirteenth century after Christ, under like circumstances, by the Franciscan Thomas of Celano, who composed on this theme the *Dies iræ, dies illa*,[1] which has become the Hymn of the Last Judgement for all Christendom. "The day of Jehovah," signifying the coming epoch of Divine judgement upon Israel and the nations, is no new conception; Zephaniah cites it as an idea familiar to his hearers, that is now at length to be realized in all its terrors. He recalls with the idea the language of Amos (5 18), of Joel (1 15 2 2. 11: see Vol. I, pp. 109–113), and Obadiah (15), reaching back to the ninth century. The doom he predicts is both wider and more complete in destructiveness than that foretold by the earlier prophets: "I will sweep, sweep all things from off the face of the ground, is the oracle of Jehovah. I will

[1] The first line of Thomas's Latin hymn forms the first sentence of Zeph. 1 15 in the Vulgate translation.

sweep off man and beast ; I will sweep off the fowls of the heaven and the fishes of the sea. And I will bring to ruin the wicked,[1] and cut off the men of wickedness from the face of the ground—it is the oracle of Jehovah." Such are the opening words of Zephaniah. This vision of a world-wide catastrophe, breaking up the fabric of natural life and bearing down in a common ruin all earthly powers—Assyria as much as Philistia or Judah—now appears for the first time in Scripture.[2] Prophecy begins to detach itself from historical conditions, giving a free rein to imagination in setting forth that which is borne in upon it by the Spirit of God ; it assumes at this stage the form of *Apocalyptic*, the mould into which Jewish religious thought tended more and more to run,—the Book of Daniel and the Revelation of St. John being finished examples of it. In virtue of this approximation, we have entitled the chapter "The Apocalypse of Zephaniah."[3]

The instrument of the impending world-ruin

[1] Here we accept G. A. Smith's correction of the text, who follows Wellhausen.

[2] Isa. 34 must, we think, be regarded as later, and probably post-exilic (see Vol. II, pp. 124-126).

[3] There existed a Jewish Apocryphal work under this title, named in patristic lists, which is quoted by Clement of Alexandria, in *Stromata* v. 11. 77.

is nowhere named,[1] nor even the quarter from which it comes. The contemporary hearer will understand (comp. Matt. 24 15). The judgement is to take the shape of a military invasion: the Day of Jehovah will be "a day of the trumpet and alarm, against the fenced cities and against the high corner-towers" (1 16); "the wealth" of the sinners in Jerusalem "shall become a prey" (1 13); the Ethiopians, on the edge of the world, are to be "the slain of Jehovah's sword" (2 12); men's "blood will be poured out like dust, and their flesh shall be as dung" (1 17). We must therefore understand the "sacrifice" prepared for the great "day," to which Jehovah invites His "consecrated guests," as signifying a huge slaughter of men, that will be carried out by His appointed instruments and that bears accordingly a sacred judicial character (1 7. 8); this image reappears in St. John's awful picture of "the great supper of God" (Rev. 19 17-21).

Who, then, are the executioners of this tremendous doom? what storm-cloud is lowering on Zephaniah's sky that portends the wholesale devastation he imagines? We answer, *The Scythian hordes*, the same that Jeremiah

[1] Similarly Amos avoids the *name* of Assyria, though it looms through his whole representation of the Day of Jehovah (see Vol. I, p. 139).

describes in his contemporary oracle of ch. 6 as: "A people from the north country, a great nation stirred up from the uttermost parts of the earth. They lay hold on bow and spear; they are cruel and have no mercy. Their voice roareth like the sea, and they ride upon horses." Neither Egypt nor Assyria is at present to be feared; these powers have to fear like others; they will be levelled by the tempest with the petty kingdoms of Palestine. In no previous prophecy are the great and small states of Israel's world ranked together as they are here in chap. 2. The day of Jehovah now breaking is of an unprecedented kind: the style of the prophet's announcement shows that the newly appearing invaders who are pouring in their swarms from unknown regions, with their ferocious aspect and uncouth array, had inspired an extreme horror and took to the minds of men a preternatural character, such as attaches to the convulsions of nature, to the earthquake or the deluge; they revealed fresh resources stored in the Divine providence for scourging the world's wickedness. Hence when the storm had passed and "Gog and Magog" had become a tradition of the last generation, Ezekiel devotes two chapters (38, 39) to them, setting forth God's judgements that must fall on this cruel power in

its turn: Gog is addressed as "coming out of the uttermost part of the north—thou and many people with thee—all of them riding upon horses, a great company and a mighty army, coming up against my people Israel, as a cloud to cover the land." The frightful havoc wrought by these savages from the steppes of central Asia supplied imagery and colouring to Jewish Apocalyptic for centuries; its traces appear in the last Book of Scripture (see Rev. 20 8). The Hunnish and Mongol invasions which desolated eastern and mid Europe in the fifth and later centuries of our era, were repetitions of the experience now awaiting the civilised lands south of the Caucasus.

Zephaniah's predictions were not indeed fulfilled to the letter. Far from reaching Ethiopia (2 12), the Scythian marauders halted at the borders of Egypt, being bought off, Herodotus tells us, by the reigning Pharaoh Psammetichus. Probably the desert brought them to a halt; moreover Egypt, intersected everywhere with canals, was a difficult country for such troops as the Scythian cavalry. Not they, but the Medes, destroyed Nineveh (vv. 13-15) in the end, as Nahum predicted (see Chap. XIX); but their irruption exposed the powerlessness of Assyria, and laid waste the regions supplying its chief resources

(see Vol. II, p. 177). Jerusalem also and the Judæan highlands appear to have escaped their ravages; but in this case, again, the harrying of the low countries up to the fortress hills of Judah, and the arrest of commerce, meant impoverishment for city and people. If Josiah, who took the reins into his hands soon after the delivery of this oracle, showed himself as vigorous in his political and military as in his religious action, the Judæan territory was capable of successful defence against the barbarian horsemen. Moreover, the reforms effected by this pious and brave young king altered the moral situation, and would justly be held to avert, for that time at least, the ruin threatened by the prophets; see Ezekiel 33 14-19, in justification of such nonfulfilment.

The preaching of Zephaniah and Jeremiah, under the stress of this awful visitation, operated, doubtless, as a powerful factor in the national reformation. These men stood toward Josiah's policy in much the same relation as that which Micah and Isaiah held to the movement of Hezekiah's days (see Jer. 26 18. 19). The situation under the two kings was closely parallel. Each of them in early youth succeeded an idolatrous predecessor, and found the national religion and morals debased and the country in extreme

danger. At the former crisis the fall of Samaria had given warning to her neighbour, and Judah was all but in the grasp of the irresistible Assyrians ; now a new foe of mysterious origin, and more destructive than any known to human memory, is espied approaching. In each case the prophet could appeal to a patriotic party, revolted by the corrupt foreign influences which had prevailed and ready to rally to the name of Jehovah, at whose head the young monarch ranges himself. Zephaniah's stern warnings found, therefore, prepared hearers, and took effect on the conscience of king and people. For this reason "the day of Jehovah" that he announced was postponed (see 2 Kings 22 18-20) ; and when a generation later, under Josiah's evil sons, the judgement did descend on Judah and Jerusalem, it was inflicted by another instrument and under conditions changed from those here contemplated.

Zephaniah is, like Nahum, a continuer of the work of Isaiah. But the two contemporaries look in opposite directions and take up different parts in Isaiah's comprehensive rôle. Nahum resumed the anti-Assyrian strain ; he brought to their climax Isaiah's prophecies of woe on the great oppressor and on his policy of "blood and iron." Zephaniah's soul burns, like Isaiah's in

his earlier chapters, against the sins of Jerusalem, which had assumed even darker features, and were bringing on the city still heavier punishment than that predicted a century before. The former cries, "Woe to the bloody city" (Nah. 3 1), meaning Nineveh ; the latter, "Woe to the rebellious and polluted city" (Zeph. 3 1), meaning Jerusalem. In his foreign outlook, Nahum's eyes are fastened on the Median invaders of Assyria; Zephaniah descries the Scythian hordes swooping down on the civilised world of western Asia.

While Nahum soars high, Zephaniah falls below their common master in oratorical and literary power. His pictures have not the clearness, nor his verses the stateliness and music, of the great prophet-poet of Jerusalem. He often leans on earlier writers ; his ideas move along the general lines of prophetical teaching, as those of Nahum scarcely do.

> The style of Zephaniah throughout has little of the vigour of that of Nahum, though in religious depth and earnestness of moral tone he greatly surpasses him (A. B. Davidson).

Zephaniah recalls Joel and Amos, along with Isaiah. He is most of all akin to Jeremiah, his companion in age, who began upon the same platform as Zephaniah but proceeded far beyond

it; for Jeremiah's work extended over forty years, while Zephaniah's, so far as we know it, was confined to a single crisis. Zephaniah stands in the shadow of Jeremiah, much as Micah in the shadow of Isaiah.

But unlike Micah and like Isaiah in this respect, and far more than Jeremiah of Anathoth, Zephaniah was a prophet *of Jerusalem*; he writes "from this place" (1 4). His fears and hopes are bound up with Mount Zion (see 1 10-12 3 1-5). His descriptions of the coming judgement may sound vague and grandiose, but he is precise and matter-of-fact when he touches on the life of the city—its different quarters, the various classes of its people and their characteristic sins (1 4-6. 8-12 3 3. 4). He points to "the Fish-gate," "the Mishneh" or Second Quarter (New-town), "the Heights," "the Maktesh"[1] where the merchants live: no other writer of the Old

[1] The Fish-gate was situated probably in the north wall of the city; see Neh. 3 3 12 39, 2 Chron. 33 14. The Tyrians were the fishmongers of Jerusalem; see Neh. 13 16. For the Mishneh (misrendered "college" in A.V.), see 2 Kings 22 14, 2 Chron. 34 22; a newer part of the city, lying north-west of the Temple area. "The Heights" seems to denote the northern parts of the city generally. The *Maktesh*, or *Mortar*, is not mentioned elsewhere: the name designates a *hollow* in the contour of Jerusalem, and would fitly apply to the old Tyropœan valley west of the Temple, especially in its upper part.

Testament makes, in a few lines, so many allusions to localities in Jerusalem. With graphic touches he paints the spiritual chaos, the loss of religious certainty and moral principle, into which the city of Jehovah's faith had sunk—the conglomerate of strange cults, the multitude of heathen priests ("Chemarim") that were a legacy from Manasseh's time, the duplicity or easy conformity of men who "swear to Jehovah or by Milcom" as you please, "the worship of the host of heaven upon the house-tops," the cynical irreligion of men "settled on their lees" who "say in their heart, Jehovah will not do good neither will He do evil,"—the last a novel trait in Israelite character (comp. Pss. 10 4 14, 53). For Zephaniah, as for his illustrious predecessor, the kingdom of God is centred in Jerusalem; all his thoughts are for the character and fate of the Holy City; her deep guilt is his despair.

It is remarkable that this prophet, though he claims royal lineage, nowhere alludes to the Davidic covenant or strikes a distinctly Messianic note; he may well have felt the degradation of David's house under Manasseh too deeply to cherish the hopes in this direction that had been raised so high by Isaiah (comp. Jer. 15 1-4). Zephaniah's pedigree is carried back, as in the case of no other prophet, to the

fourth ancestor—a peculiarity explained by the assumption that the "Hezekiah" with which the genealogy terminates was the famous king of that name. He was Hezekiah's great-great-grandson, while Josiah was his great-grandson, although they were contemporaries,—Josiah reckoning an average of thirty-three years, Zephaniah of twenty-five, in the generations covering the century between. (Observe that Manasseh, and possibly Amon after him, had sacrificed children to Molech : 2 Kings 21 6. 20.)

We may infer from the above figures that Zephaniah was young, like his comrade Jeremiah, at his appearance in the prophetic character. He speaks with the severity and uncontrolled vehemence of youth ; he represents the new generation, springing up with Josiah and ready to prompt or second his reforms, who were in violent reaction against the Assyrianising policy of the last fifty years. The prophet's name—Hebrew *Z'phan-yah*, (whom) *Yahveh-hath-hid*—has suggested the fancy that he had been concealed at his birth, like Moses in Egypt, during Manasseh's persecution. The name, however, is borne by three other Old Testament personages, one of whom, called "Zephaniah the second priest" in 2 Kings 25 18 (referred to also in Jer. 21 1, etc.), was contemporary with our prophet;

another, who named his son "Josiah," belonged to the restored exiles of 520 B.C. (Zech. 6 9. 14).

The integrity of the Book is denied by many recent critics. The concluding paragraph, 3 14-20, may reasonably be called in question: (1) because of its joyous impress, which is in strong contrast to the gloomy and even appalling outlook of the rest of the work—the change would presume an entirely altered situation and mood in the writer, if he be still the same Zephaniah; (2) because of the language and style of the closing stanza, which resembles those of the Second Isaiah (comp. ver. 14 with Isa. 54 1; 15. 16 with 40 1. 2; 17 with 62 5 63 1; 19 with 60 14 61 7). (3) The words of vv. 19. 20 distinctly presuppose the Judæan captivity. Zephaniah's continuer was, like himself, a lover of Jerusalem. This delightful song, if it had stood alone bearing no author's name, would inevitably have been referred, along with Isaiah 40 ff., to the return from Babylon. Its place at the end of the Book makes it easier to suppose that it was a postscript from a later time, as probably was the case with Isaiah 12 (see Vol. II, p. 54), and possibly with Micah 7 14-20 (see Vol. I, pp. 247, 248) and Amos 9 11-15 (Vol. I, p. 154). "The Book of the Minor Prophets," says Robertson Smith, "is made up of short pieces, some bearing a name

and some anonymous; and it is only old usage that ascribes anonymous pieces to the last prophet whose name is prefixed to his prophecy."

Other passages excite suspicion as to their genuineness, but apart from mere errors of the pen, or possible dislocations of the text, the two following are the only instances in which there is plausible ground for assuming interpolation:

(*a*) *The oracle against Moab and Ammon*, 2 8-11; for it attacks peoples of whose hostility to Judah at this epoch we hear nothing from any other quarter (yet see Deut. 23 3-6, published about this time, and Jer. 9 26 25 17 ff., where Moab and Ammon are prominently associated with Judah in punishment); a better reason lies in the difference of metre, vv. 8-11 falling out of the Qinah (*dirge*) measure (see Vol. I, p. 144) in which the Woes before and after this are composed. Ver. 11 is suspected not only for this last reason, but because it predicts the universal conversion of idolaters,—an idea said to be irrelevant here and belonging to post-exilic thought (against this, see Isa. 19 18-25, and the observations on pp. 85–7 of Vol. II). A. B. Davidson ably maintains the genuineness of the whole passage.

(*b*) Vv. 9. 10 of chap. 3 are open to the last-stated objection, and are regarded as a gloss from a subsequent prophet by G. A. Smith and

other critics. Ver. 10 is extremely difficult, for it interrupts the connexion, and apparently presupposes the Exile. Ewald, however, would read instead of "my dispersed" the proper name "Put" or "Phut" (Heb. *phut* for *phutsai*), which Nahum 3 9 gave us associated with "Cush" as here—an emendation which removes the anachronism. "The verse is obscure on account of the uncertain meaning of several words in it" (Davidson). On the whole, the judgement of Robertson Smith holds good, that—

> Though the sequence of thought in the Book of Zephaniah is not so smooth as a Western reader may desire, a single leading motive runs through the whole, viz. the approach of a world-wide judgement, which the prophet announces as near at hand, and interprets, on the lines laid down by Isaiah in his prophecies about Israel and Assyria, as destined to destroy the wicked and prepare the way for the visible sovereignty of the righteous God of Israel.

On this basis we analyse Zephaniah's Book as follows (its plan resembles that of Joel; see Vol. I, pp. 107–109):

A. JEHOVAH'S THREATENING AGAINST JERUSALEM, chap. 1.[1]

1. *A storm impending*, that will sweep bare the face of the earth, vv. 2 3.

[1] In ver. 4 read, with the LXX, "name," instead of "remnant, of Baal"; comp. Hos. 2 17.

2. *Judah and Jerusalem the special objects* of the coming of this Day of Jehovah, 4-18.

(*a*) The various classes of idolaters marked out for destruction, 4-6.[1]

(*b*) The butchery of the sinners furnishes a sacrificial feast to Jehovah's guests, for which the royal house and court supply eminent victims, 7-9.[2]

(*c*) The cries of the slaughtered heard from the several quarters of Jerusalem, 10. 11; and the city "searched with candles" to hunt out Jehovah's deniers, 12.

(*d*) Complete destruction of wealth and military power, with wholesale bloodshed—a day of unrelieved misery; for "Jehovah will make an end—yea, a speedy end—of all that dwell in the land," 13-18.

B. Jehovah's Admonition, based on the Judgements falling on other Peoples, chap. 2 1–3 8.

1. *A call to seek Jehovah* in the short respite, addressed to "the lowly of the land," who "may be hid in the day of Jehovah's anger," 1-3.

2. *Doom of the Peoples*, chap. 2 4-15.

(*a*) For the storm falls first on the Philistine

[1] The Chemarim (Heb. *K'marim*) are mentioned in 2 Kings 23 5 as put down by Josiah.

[2] The "guests" invited seem to be the wild invaders, who will revel in slaughter and feast on the spoil; comp. Isa. 13 3-5 (exilic). The "leaping over the threshold" of ver. 9 was a foreign superstitious custom, that had become fashionable in Jerusalem; comp. 1 Sam. 5 5.

cities,[1] 4. 5; amid whose ruins "the remnant of the house of Judah" will pasture their flocks, 6. 7. [The critics mark the last clause, referring to the Captivity, as a gloss.]

(*b*) On Moab and Ammon, whom a doom awaits like that of Sodom and Gomorrah, 8-11 (see the discussion above). The "pride" (as in Isa. 16 6) and insolent aggression of these kinsmen of Israel are the causes of their destruction.

(*c*) On the distant Ethiopians, 12.

(*d*) On rich and "joyous" Nineveh, 13-15.

3. *Doom approaching Jerusalem*, chap. 3 1-6.

(*a*) The sins of Jerusalem described: (1) her stubborn rebellion against Jehovah, 1. 2; (2) the greed and cruelty of her rulers, 3; (3) the hypocrisy of her prophets and priests—contrasted with—

(*b*) The stern rectitude of Jehovah shown by His continual judgements, 5. 6.

[1] The name "Cherethites" (Heb. *Krethim*) is used as a synonym for "Philistines" (see 1 Sam. 30 14. 16, Ezek. 25 16, etc.), and appears to point to a *Cretan* origin for this people. This accords with the fact that in Amos 9 7, Jer. 47 4, and Deut 2 23, the Philistines are traced to *Caphtor*—are named indeed "Caphtorim" in the last passage (comp. Gen. 10 14); for Caphtor was, most likely, the island of Crete, or some district in Crete (see Hastings' *Dict. of Bible* on these words). Dr Cheyne (in *Encycl. Biblica*), however, finds the original Caphtorim and Cherethites on the south coast of Asia Minor. The Philistine cities suffered severely in the wars between Assyria and Egypt; the Scythian inroad seems to have given them a finishing blow. They disappear from history after this time. *Gath* is no longer mentioned after its dismantling by Uzziah; see 2 Chron. 26 6.

4. *The hope*, hitherto disappointed, *that repentance will yet be found in Jerusalem*, which is solemnly warned of the fate impending, 7. 8.

C. THE PROMISE OF DELIVERANCE TO THE PENITENT, ch. 3 9-13; or simply 3 11-13.

1. Vv. 9. 10, generalizing upon Isa. 19 18-25, predict *the conversion of the heathen*, along with restored Israel, to Jehovah's worship—all "serving with one consent." (See p. 39 above.)

2. Vv. 11-13, taking up the thread of B.4, tell how "in that day" *a humbled remnant* shall possess God's "holy mountain," who will securely "trust in the name of Jehovah." This seems the natural goal of the prophecy.

[THE EPILOGUE, OR POSTSCRIPT, chap. 3 14-20. Seemingly from a later hand: see p. 38 above.

1. Jerusalem bidden to sing over *her restoration and Jehovah's return* to her, 14-17.

2. *Her mourners and exiles brought home and herself honoured*, whereas she was disgraced among the peoples, 18-20.]

CHAPTER XXII

HABAKKUK, AND THE RISE OF THE CHALDÆANS

First Assailant of the Chaldæans—Comparison of Habakkuk and Isaiah—Prophecy and Psalm—Unity of chs. 1, 2—Order of vv. 1-4 and 5-11 of chap. 1—Budde's Reconstruction—Davidson's Criticisms of Budde—G. A. Smith's Conjecture—Ch. 1 1-4 aimed at Domestic Oppressors—Jehovah's Strange Work—Habakkuk's Remonstrance—Wrong punished by Greater Wrong!—Habakkuk parts company with Jeremiah—Protest against Imperialism—Jehovah's Response—Habakkuk and St Paul—Taunt-Song against Nebuchadrezzar—Features of Chaldæan Rule—Scythian Cavalry employed by Nebuchadrezzar—Nebuchadrezzar the Builder—Tyranny is Suicide—Authorship of ch. 3—Affinities of the Ode—God in Nature and Redemption—Resemblances of ch. 3 to chs. 1, 2—Kirkpatrick's Reading of ch. 3—Resemblance to Book of Job—Recovered Faith—Name and Locality of Habakkuk—Jewish Legends about Habakkuk—Analysis of the Book.

HABAKKUK is the first of the prophets to denounce "the Chaldæans" as Israel's oppressors. For him they take the place held so long by the Assyrians, viz. that of Jehovah's

instrument for chastising His people's sins—an instrument destined to destruction in its turn because of the cruelty and violence with which it exercises its God-given power. This theme involves nothing new in principle: Isaiah's teaching, now confirmed by the course of history, had given the same interpretation to the Assyrian tyranny. But to Habakkuk the problem assumes a darker aspect, and he reaches a more advanced solution. His treatment of the situation is marked by boldness of conception and imaginative genius. "Perhaps no other poem of equal length has a range of vision so wide and so lofty" (McCurdy). Habakkuk is one of the prophet-poets of Israel, like Isaiah and Nahum—a singer rather than an orator. The concise, dramatic form of his composition and his abrupt style involve his verses in obscurity—an obscurity aggravated, as many critics judge, by corruptions and serious displacements in the Hebrew text.

Habakkuk's position in regard to the Chaldæan conquest differs from that in which Isaiah stood toward the Assyrian crisis of a century ago in two respects: he looks for no immediate vindication of Jehovah's covenant-faithfulness, such as Isaiah predicted and witnessed in the deliverance of Jerusalem from Sennacherib; and he

must needs challenge Jehovah's use of evil tools —a thought foreign to Isaiah's mind. In the raising of the latter question Habakkuk's originality lies. He is in search of a theodicy.

Chs. 1 and 2 form *the prophecy* of our author, introduced by the title of 1 1: "The oracle (*massa'*; see Vol. I, p. 58 f.) which Habakkuk the prophet did see."[1] Chap. 3 bears a new title of its own: "A prayer of Habakkuk the prophet." This composition is in fact a *psalm* (comp. the titles of Pss. 17, 86, 90, and the subscription of Ps. 72), of a detached and general character, bearing on its surface no marks of connexion with the foregoing prophecies or the historical situation they imply. The identity of authorship is therefore questioned; and critics decide for or against the editorial tradition of 3 1, according to the view they take of the internal structure of the two pieces (chs. 1, 2, and ch. 3) and the mental characteristics revealed in each.

[1] This heading has its only exact counterpart in Isa. 13 1, where it is manifestly editorial (see Vol. II, p. 92); it resembles the superscription of *Nahum*, preceding *Habakkuk* in the order of "The Twelve." The word *massa'* appears in the titles of Nahum, Habakkuk, Zech. 9 1, 12 1, and Malachi—a designation otherwise confined to the oracles of Judgement in Isa. 13–23. This very word is forbidden as having become a cant phrase in Jer. 23 33-40—a prohibition showing it to have been in popular use in Habakkuk's time. *Massa'* may well therefore be original here, as in Nahum.

I. *The prophecy proper* extends from chap. 1 2 to 2 20.

The unity of this composition, and the order and connexion of its several parts, are also in dispute. Admittedly, the deliverance of 2 4, ending with the words "The just shall live in his faithfulness," is the climax of the Book; the series of Woes that follow—2 6 (or 5)–20—form a pæan composed in a mode with which Isaiah has made us familiar, that supplies a fitting sequel to the oracle of ver. 4—an outburst of the prophet's joy over the downfall of the great oppressor, now assured to him. As a whole, chap. 1 leads up naturally enough to the crisis signalised by 2 1-4: the colossal greed and savagery of the new master into whose hand Jehovah gives the empire of the world, create a problem in Divine government for which Habakkuk asks a solution. The position of vv. 5-11 in the train of thought is the stumbling-block; yet this is just the passage which furnishes the historical datum and point of attachment for the Book, by the reference it makes in ver. 6 to the Chaldæans.

Now, the above section of chap. 1 stands isolated in its context: with it removed, vv. 2-4 and 12-17 appear to give a continuous and consistent sense, forming (it is said) a sustained appeal against

some powerful and cruel rule under which Israel has been placed "for correction" by Jehovah. *Who* the tyrant is we are not told: only the later verses point to a foreign, imperial potentate, under whom "the nations" are suffering along with Israel—this suits Assyria or Babylon equally well. The accepted application of the prophecy to the latter power is due to ver. 6; but if the paragraph in which this datum stands be eliminated, the reference of the rest of the chapter becomes an open question.

Dr Giesebrecht, therefore,[1] whose criticisms are always judicious, proposed *to reverse the order of* vv. 1-4 and 5-11: he reads the latter paragraph as Habakkuk's opening announcement of the Chaldæan invasion, and the rest of the chapter (1-4. 12-17) as the prophet's complaint and appeal to Jehovah against the invaders He has sent. Wellhausen and Nowack, in their Commentaries, adopt Giesebrecht's rectification; moreover, they regard vv. 5-11 as earlier in date by some years than the remainder of the chapter, and possibly from another hand, since in the one representa-

[1] Pp. 196–198 of his *Beiträge zur Jesaiakritik, nebst einer Studie über prophetische Schriftstellerei* (1890), in which he refutes Hackmann's theory, adopted by Dr Cheyne, of the post-exilic date of the great Messianic passages of Isaiah.

tion the Chaldæans are seen *approaching* and in the other already *dominating*.

Karl Budde, the Hebrew Professor of Strassburg, has struck out another explanation[1] of the seeming disorder in this Book. Instead of throwing 1 5 11 backward, he carries it forward and sets it down *after* 2 4. Chap. 1 2–2 4 (minus 1 5 11) he then reads as *an impeachment of the Assyrians*, to which, on his theory, chap. 1 5 11 gives *Jehovah's reply to the effect that He is raising up the Chaldæans to punish Assyria*. The prophecy, as thus originally conceived, Budde supposes to have been delivered within the years 621 615 B.C., being designed to encourage the Judæans to revolt from Nineveh, whose ascend-

[1] See the *Expositor*, V. i. 372 385 (May 1895), where Budde also discusses an elaborate reconstruction proposed by Rothstein, which has not found favour, but which starts from the correct assumption that 1 2 4 speaks of oppression *within Judah itself*. Budde's view was propounded earlier, and more completely, in the *Studien und Kritiken* for 1893, p. 383 ff. The latest theory is that of B. Duhm, who substitutes for Budde's *Assyrians and Chaldæans* of the 7th century the *Persians and Greeks* (under Alexander the Great) of the 4th! He brings the latter into Habakkuk's text by reading, "Lo, I raise up the *Chittim*" (see Dan. 11 30) instead of "the Chasdim" (Chaldæans). In these feats of critical daring Duhm still bears the palm! He does good service, however, by reasserting the solidarity of chap. 3 with the rest of the book.

ency is now seriously threatened by her southern neighbour and old rival Babylon. In "the law" and "judgement" whose action is "slacked" (1 4), he sees the Torah then newly promulgated by Josiah and hindered in its execution through the interference of the Assyrian overlord. In the flush of the Josianic reformation, Budde contends, Judah could claim with a good conscience to be "righteous" (1 13, 2 4), and resented as undeserved the sufferings inflicted by her heathen rulers. The event contradicted the above forecast, the Chaldæans turning out to be the destroyers instead of the deliverers of Israel: this accounts, Budde thinks, for the disturbance of the original order, Habakkuk's editor, with more adroitness than honesty, having transposed his announcement of the Chaldæans' coming to the position where it now appears, on purpose to remedy this failure and to make it appear as though the Chaldæans had been the oppressors denounced and not the rescuers greeted by the prophet! Budde's solution of the difficulty has found considerable favour; Cornill in particular,[1] and G. A. Smith,[2] give it their adhesion—the

[1] In the later editions of his useful *Einleitung in das alte Testament*.

[2] *The Book of the Twelve Prophets* (Expositor's Bible), vol. ii, p. 119 ff.

latter, however, with an important modification to be noticed afterwards.

A. B. Davidson has stated (in pp. 50–55 of the Introduction to Habakkuk in the *Cambridge Bible for Schools*) the strong objections that lie against Budde's construction. The historical basis for it is wanting. By the year 621, in the middle of Josiah's reign, Assyria was no longer oppressing the Judæans; the Scythian terror had before this time eclipsed the old fear from that quarter; Nineveh was shorn of her distant provinces and with difficulty held the Medes at bay. Such was the course of her history, as we have traced it in previous chapters (Vol. II). In the given political situation the language of 1 15-17, applied to Assyria, would be an anachronism. And though the Chaldæans had by this time revolted from Nineveh and were probably in league with her other enemies, *the Medes* were her direct assailants; from them the fatal blow was impending, which finally fell in the year 607. Not till after the battle of Carchemish (B.C. 605) did the Chaldæans assume the rôle ascribed to them in 1 5-11—then, and not before, was that people "raised up" to "march through the breadth of the earth." This seems to be the earliest possible date for the paragraph in question.

Dr G. A. Smith's conjecture, that *the Egyptian rule* is denounced in 1 2-4. 12-17 and *its overthrow by the Chaldæans* promised in 1 5-11, escapes the above objection; but what little we know of the brief dominance of Pharaoh-Necho in Palestine (608–605) does not warrant our applying to it the indictment of 1 2-4. 12-17. Necho's victories were not of the wide and conclusive character indicated in 1 14-17. This Pharaoh inflicted two definite injuries on Judæa, neither of which is referred to—the defeat and death of Josiah, and the captivity of his son Jehoahaz; but he established no empire over "the nations."

The assumption from which all the schemes of readjustment proceed, that of the continuity of 1 2-4 with 1 12-17, is justly questioned by A. B. Davidson. Instead of these sections of the prophecy being parts of the same lament, they are quite distinct. No syllable in the former passage breathes of *foreign* oppression; it is only the identification of "the wicked" and "the righteous" of ver. 4 with "the wicked" and the "more righteous than he" of ver. 13 that has led the above-mentioned critics to discover the heathen tyrant in the beginning of the chapter. Read by itself, the protest with which the Book opens sounds like nothing else

but the familiar plaint of the prophets against the misgovernment and social injustice rank in Judæa under the later kings: "this is the natural sense of the verses and of the words used in them." With Davidson agree on this point not only Pusey, Delitzsch, Kirkpatrick, but "advanced" critics also like Kuenen, Driver, and McCurdy.

How long, O Jehovah, have I called, and Thou dost not hear!
I cry out to Thee "Violence," and Thou wilt not save!
Why dost Thou bid me look on trouble and behold mischief,
So that oppression and violence meet mine eyes,
And strife comes, and quarrel arises?
Therefore the law is palsied, and judgement cannot move;
For the wicked sets watch about the righteous,
So that judgement goeth forth lamed!

It is the cry of a patriot outraged by civil wrong, by the improbity of magistrates and the poisoning of the fountains of justice, such as the prophets had denounced ever since Amos and which brought about the ruin of both the Israelite kingdoms. Hab. 1 2-4 echoes the accusations of Zeph. 3 1-3, Jer. 5 25-29 6 6. 7; it repeats the tale of Isa. 1 21-23, Mic. 3 1-3 7 2-4, of Amos 3 10 5 11. 12, etc., relating to earlier times; comp. also Pss. 35, 55, 82, for the protests of pious Israelites

to Jehovah against the oppression of their fellow countrymen. The Deuteronomic legislation was, in fact, nullified by the radical corruption of Judæan society, not by the interference of foreign rulers.

What is God's answer to the prophet's indictment of his people? It is just such as had been made to Amos and Isaiah and Zephaniah in turn—the same that is given to his contemporary Jeremiah: "Lo, I am raising up the Chaldæans!" (6). This is Jehovah's "work" for the day that is approaching—a work strange and incredible, since it meant the destruction of the edifice of restored law and worship but just erected by Josiah (5), which despite their infidelity the Judæans cherished with a patriotic confidence; comp. Jer. 7 1-15. Babylon will be the avenger of Jehovah's wrongs upon Judah, as the Scythians had threatened to be about 630 B.C., and as the Assyrians had been in the eighth century. Hab. 1 5-11 is therefore parallel to Isa. 5 26-30, and holds the same relation to its foregoing context as the latter prediction to the "Woes" of Isa. 5 1-25. Chaldæa plays over again the familiar part of Assyria (hence perhaps the abruptness of her introduction); the new power, which was in fact the offspring of the old inheriting its character with its dominion, is

"ordained for judgement" upon the crying sins of Judah (vv. 2-4). So far, Habakkuk's doctrine contains nothing novel; he simply applies with incisive force the logic of Amos and Isaiah to his own times.

But in vv. 12-17 his thought takes a surprising turn. Instead of acquiescing in Jehovah's response to the cry raised to heaven by Judæan sin, the prophet *remonstrates against that answer*. The remonstrance implies experience of Chaldæan usage, and therefore was separated by some interval of time[1] from the threat of vv. 5-11. Jehovah's answer to Habakkuk was practically given by the victory of Carchemish in 605, which brought south-western Asia to the feet of Nebuchadrezzar; after that event, Judæa soon came to taste the quality of the new empire. The whole of Habakkuk's prophecy thus falls between the years 605 and 597, at which latter date Jehoiakim revolted from his Babylonian master and was crushed. Earlier prophets had been content to see in the subjugation of Israel to heathen powers a nemesis upon its rebellion against Jehovah, Isaiah finding

[1] In the composition of the poem, the scenes of which extend over several years (see 3 2), this interval disappears, and Habakkuk's second appeal to Jehovah (1 12-17), with dramatic propriety, follows immediately on the answer to his first appeal of 1 2-4.

his comfort in the thought that the saved "remnant" will preserve the seed of the nation to reflourish in a better day; Habakkuk ventures to question *ab initio* the righteousness of the use of such instruments by a holy God. As Dr G. A. Smith puts it, at this point for the first time "the prophet" appears "as sceptic" (yet see Amos 7 1-4). The horrible inhumanity and the idolatry of brute force displayed by the Chaldæans in their dealings with subject peoples (14-17) forced this contradiction on the prophet's mind. At the same time, the interlude of freedom and national revival enjoyed under Josiah (see pp. 2, 19–20) had made the reimposed bondage the more galling for the Judæans. Something of the new scepticism manifest in Habakkuk is due to the growth of the spirit of humanity, and to the finer sense of the Divine rectitude acquired under the teaching of his predecessors.

In ver. 12, commencing his second appeal, the prophet appears submissive; he repeats, in his grand style, the old patient creed: Jehovah's eternal being assures His people's survival; their present dire experience will issue in "correction," not extermination. Suddenly, in ver. 13, his suppressed indignation blazes out—But how can God associate Himself with monsters like

these Chaldæans? how revolting that He should call their doings His "work"! (5):

> Too pure are Thine eyes to behold evil,
> And to look on mischief Thou canst not endure!
> Wherefore then dost Thou look on while the robbers rob;[1]
> Art silent, while the wicked swallows up one that is more righteous than he?

The critics who must make "the wicked and righteous" of this verse square with "the wicked and righteous" of ver. 4 miss the point of the prophet's daring sarcasm. Toward His people Jehovah is strict enough—His "eyes too pure," forsooth, to bear the sight of wrong (comp. *e.g.* Ps. 5 4 6); yet He watches calmly the outrages of this world-tyrant, and keeps silence while the Chaldæans trample down a nation which, bad though it may be, is better than themselves! *Why punish the wicked by the more wicked?*[2] This is the enigma that confronts Habakkuk—an enigma confounding indeed when it is once realized, and inevitable at the given stage of revelation.

Here Habakkuk parts company with Jeremiah,

[1] We adopt Wellhausen's emendation.

[2] In ver. 13, Judah is not called absolutely "righteous," but "righteous in comparison with" its enemy. One could well understand a high-minded French patriot denouncing the Germans at the end of 1870 in terms that he had applied to the violence and chicanery of his own Government at the beginning of the same year.

whose view of Judah's ill-desert he has endorsed in 1 2-4. He takes the first step in that inquiry as to the justice of God's administration in human life and in the course of history—"the riddle of this painful earth"—on which Israel meditated with fruitful results during the Exile, and which gave birth to the Book of Job and the doctrine of the Suffering Servant of Isaiah 53. The difference between the two contemporary teachers does not take the extreme form assumed by those who see in "the righteous" and "the wicked" of 1 4 *Judah and the Chaldæans* and suppose Habakkuk to represent his people as innocent in their quarrel with Nebuchadrezzar. If that were so, Habakkuk's position would be almost that of "the prophets," blind to the moral condition of their country,[1] over whom Jeremiah's "heart" was "broken" and "all his bones shook" (23 9-40). Like Jeremiah, our prophet regards the Chaldæan power as "ordained for judgement"; Jeremiah, like him, foresees a tremendous doom awaiting the king of Babylon "when the time of his own land

[1] Though Habakkuk did not side with the popular prophets who opposed Jeremiah, he helps us to understand their position (see pp. 170–172 below), and his protest indicates the furious resentment roused by the rule of Nebuchadrezzar, which led to the desperate rebellions made under Jehoiakim and Zedekiah.

shall come" (Jer. 25 11 ff., 27 7: Jeremiah's authorship of chs. 50, 51 is denied). What exercises Habakkuk is not that Judah should be punished, but punished by such hands—that the Holy One of Israel should call the Chaldæan king "My servant" as He does repeatedly in Jeremiah, and should say of this inhuman despot, "I give it [the dominion of the earth] unto whom it seemeth right unto Me; and now have I given all these lands into the hand of Nebuchadrezzar the king of Babylon" (25 9 27 6 43 10). Jeremiah, on his part, sees no difficulty in this—any weapon is good enough for punishing apostasy so vile as that of Judah and her kings—he condemns Jehoiakim and Zedekiah in turn for breaking faith with the master whom Jehovah had set over them (comp. Ezek. 16 59 17 16 ff.). Habakkuk is grieved to the heart by God's setting up such a master: the Chaldæan dominion horrifies him—not Judah only, but the human race is laid under this frightful incubus; and *Jehovah*, it seems, has done it!

Wherefore hast Thou made mankind as fishes of the sea,
As the worms that have no ruler?
All of them with the angle he takes up;
He draws them into his net, and gathers them into his seine.
Therefore he rejoices and exults!

Thereupon he sacrifices to his net, and burns incense to his seine;
For by them his portion is made fat, and his food grows rich!
Is he for ever to draw the sword,[1] and to slay continually the nations without pity? (vv. 14-17).

Here is the first inspired appeal against "man's inhumanity to man," against the crimes committed in the name of empire and the exploiting of the masses for dynastic interests. Amos and Isaiah were touched by this sentiment (see Vol. I, p. 148, and Vol. II, p. 53); in the Book of Habakkuk it is the leading motive. Here the revolt of the spirit of mankind against imperialism comes to consciousness, as it was bound to do under the Israelite religion, and speaks out its complaint to God. By the end of the first chapter, the sin of Israel appears to be swallowed up in the greater sin of the Chaldæan conqueror against humanity.

The prophet's second appeal, springing out of the awful reply to his first, is now lodged with Jehovah, and he waits for the answer (2 1):

On my watch will I stand, and will put myself on my tower;
And I will spy out to see what He will say to me,
And what He[2] will reply to my expostulation.

[1] The Received Text here is obviously corrupt: we follow Giesebrecht's and Wellhausen's emendations.

[2] We venture, with the critics, to read the third person instead of the first.

The oracle of ver. 4 is Jehovah's response; the prophet is directed to "write it" large "on a tablet," setting it up in some public place, where those who hurry past "may read it" (2); for himself, he is bidden to be patient, assured that in God's good time He will vindicate His doings (3). The oracle is this:

Lo, swollen (*or* perverted), not straight, is his soul in him!
But the righteous shall live by his faithfulness (ver. 4).

Budde thinks this a slight and inconclusive answer; accordingly he brings in ch. 1 5-11 to enlarge and enforce it, as we have seen above—the connexion between the two parts of Jehovah's reply on this hypothesis is far from obvious. But 2 4 is in fact a sufficient reply—the only reply at present possible—to Habakkuk's remonstrance; it is uttered with the brevity befitting a Divine oracle and in a form calculated to provoke reflexion. Jehovah admits His servant's charge against the new ruler,—his arrogance and falseness; such dominion, it is implied, in the nature of things cannot last (comp. 1 11). The counter-sentence, "The just shall live by his stedfastness," makes no promise of continuance to the existing Judæan state, which is steeped,

as Habakkuk had declared, in wickedness (1 2-4): but that which is righteous in the nation shall survive the present tyranny; truth and loyalty can never perish. "The vision," after all, was worth "writing and making plain." It is that which the Apostle John saw in his "last hour," under the emperor Domitian — "The world passeth away and the lust thereof, but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever"; the same that Jesus saw when He said on the night before He suffered, "In the world you will have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world."

Faithfulness, rather than *faith* (*trustfulness*), is the sense of the last word of the oracle; it is the quality by which a man against all odds adheres to truth and right. The Apostle Paul gave a new turn to the text, suggested by the Greek *pistis*, in building upon it the New Testament principle of Justification by Faith. The two applications are not difficult to reconcile; and the use of the sentence in Heb. 10 38 lies somewhere between Habakkuk's and Paul's meaning. The life of the human spirit is in its *cleaving to God*: for Israel in Habakkuk's age, that cleaving meant *fidelity* to God's covenant amidst national apostasy and overwhelming disaster; for Paul and the hearers of his gospel,

it meant *trust* in God's grace, which proffers forgiveness and new life in Jesus Christ. Accepting Habakkuk's watchword, the loyal remnant of Israel met the shock of the fall of Jerusalem and the theocratic state and endured the dreary night of exile. Jehovah was Himself its dwelling-place ; the roots of its life were in Him, the Holy and Eternal, beneath the region of change and fear.

Thus emboldened, the prophet looks the Chaldæan in the face and braves the worst that he may do. Vv. 5–20 of ch. 2 are "a proverb (*mashal*), a riddling taunt-song," that the outraged nations are heard chanting over their proud and cruel oppressors—an eruption of volcanic anger from the heart of humanity. It takes the shape of a five-fold "Woe,"[1] in the style of Isaiah's tirade against his people in chs. 5 8–25 10 1–4 (see Vol. II., pp. 35–36. The five strophés of this song of cursing bear on *the insatiate pride* (5–8), *the unscrupulous greed* (9–11), *the works of building* reared at a vast cost of human life (12–14),

[1] The opening words of v. 5 are unintelligible, as they stand in the Massoretic text. Probably the word "wine" (wanting in the oldest Versions) is a corruption of the not dissimilar Hebrew for "Woe." This correction, proposed by Wellhausen (an admirable textual critic), would bring the first stanza into line with the other four, each beginning with "Woe to ——"

the shameless sensuality (15–17), *the base idolatry* (19. 18)[1] of the imperial power.

The Chaldæan was essentially a reproduction of the Assyrian domination (see Vol. I, Ch. x); it proved for Judah, in effect, a fatal culmination of the former oppression. Hence Babylon drew upon herself, in concentrated form, the hate treasured up against Nineveh for a hundred and fifty years. What needs to be said about the place of Babylon and the Chaldæans in history and the influence of their empire on Israel and on prophecy, will be reserved for Vol. IV and the period of the Exile. Two or three features of the Chaldæan conquest call, however, for remark.

The sudden rise and swift advance of the new power is vividly described in 1 6: the Assyrian invasion in the last century had been gradual and long-foreseen, like the tide that now advances now retreats; the Chaldæans pour themselves in flood, at a rush, over the whole field. This was rendered possible by the helpless condition of the peoples so long trodden down by the Assyrians, and by the recent devastations of the northern barbarians; Egypt alone could make any stand against the Babylonian troops. But the rapid stride to imperial sway was due to

[1] These two verses, by some accident, have changed places in the MSS.

the genius of a single man. The crushing victory of *Nebuchadrezzar*, "the Napoleon of the east," over Pharaoh-Necho at Carchemish, in the year 605, gained for him at a stroke the mastery of western Asia. But the dominion created so swiftly declined and fell almost as swiftly at Nebuchadrezzar's decease. He died in 561 B.C.; and it took but twenty-three years under his feeble successors to bring the empire to an end. The terrific speed of the advance is to Habakkuk a presage of *speedy departure*: "Then shall he sweep by as a wind; and he overpasses [the mark] and is guilty" (1 11)—the furious onset of the enemy, carrying everything before it, brings him quickly into collision with the purposes of God.

It is noticeable that Habakkuk's description of the Chaldæan forces resembles that given by Jeremiah in 4 11-13. 29 6 22. 23, with seeming reference to the earlier Scythian assailants (comp. Ezek. 38 4. 15 concerning "Gog, of the land of Magog"; see pp. 29-31 above). The prophet sees an army of "horsemen" coming—"they fly as an eagle that hasteth to devour" (1 8). It was their command of this arm which gave the Chaldæan movements their amazing celerity. Now, Babylonia was not a country of horses; the probability is that on the break-up of the

Scythian hordes, which had roamed about plundering in south-western Asia for twenty years, large bodies of their cavalry were enlisted by the Chaldæans. Nebuchadrezzar seized this weapon, and used it with brilliant effect. The same thing has repeatedly happened on the collision of a barbarian with a civilised military power: so the Romans utilised the Goths, and the English the Mahrattas and Pathans in India. This employment of the Scythian horsemen, who retained their ferocity and marauding habits and their well-known worship of *the sword* (1 16), gave additional horror to Chaldæan warfare.

The third "Woe," in ch. 2 12-14 (to which ver. 11 leads up), against him who "builds a city in blood" and sets "the nations toiling [to provide] for smoke and wearing themselves out for sheer vanity," suits exactly the Babylonian king. Nebuchadrezzar was, perhaps, the greatest builder who ever lived. The walls and temples of Babylon reared by him were the wonder of antiquity; he expended on them the wealth of his conquests and the lives of countless captives —all to end in "smoke and nothingness!" Ver. 14 is quoted from Isa. 11 9 to intimate that, instead of the fame of the new Babylon and its builder, "the glory of Jehovah shall cover the

earth." The most signal note of Habakkuk's triumph over the Chaldæans is his conviction, pervading the song, that the oppressor prepares his own destruction. The oracle of 2 5 virtually said that a power so arrogant and treacherous cannot "live"; as Dr G. A. Smith expresses it:

> In the nature of things [this tyranny] cannot endure, but works out its own penalties. . . . In cutting off others the tyrant is but *forfeiting his own life* (ver. 10). The very violence done to nature, the deforesting of Lebanon for instance, and the vast hunting of wild beasts (17), shall recoil on him. Hardly anywhere have we found so complete an absence of all reference to the direct action of God in the punishment of the tyrant. . . . These great *proverbs* or *taunt-songs*, in conformity with the proverbs of the later Wisdom, dwell only upon the inherent tendency to decay of all injustice. . . . Tyranny, they assert- and history ever since has affirmed their truthfulness—tyranny is suicide.[1]

Thus Habakkuk combines the moralist with the seer, the inspiration of the Chokmah with that of Prophecy. He has grasped the law which binds together moral and material dissolution, and understands how "sin, when it is full-grown, gives birth to death." The ethical sensibility which compelled him to ask how God

[1] *Book of the Twelve Prophets*, vol. ii, p. 144.

could avail Himself for Israel's punishment of an instrument so much worse, led him to see that this truculent power by the enormity of its wrong-doing incurs irretrievable ruin. Twice the refrain is heard (perhaps oftener in the original poem), "because of men's blood, and for the violence done to the earth, to the city and to all that dwell therein" (2 8. 17). "The nations" on whom the Chaldæans have trampled, rise up to taunt them (6); "the remnant of the peoples" whom she has "spoiled," spoil Babylon in turn (8). She is "storing up" for herself "wrath against the day of wrath," and by her crimes "lading herself with pledges" (6) that must be paid to the last farthing.

II. The question of the authorship of *the concluding hymn*, chap. 3, does not greatly concern Habakkuk's prophetical work, though it does affect our estimate of the range of his thought and his literary gifts. Ch. 2 20 is a link between the taunt-song of 2 5-19 and the added psalm; this verse must be put down to a later hand, if ch. 3 be not from the prophet Habakkuk. This is peculiar amongst chapters of the Prophets in being furnished with musical annotations[1] (vv. 1. 3. 9. 13, and the subscription in 19), which

[1] On these terms—Shigionoth, Selah, etc.—see Davison's *Praises of Israel*, p. 86, and Hastings' *D.B.*

show that it was at some time used by the Temple choristers. Either the song, belonging originally to the Book of Habakkuk, was extracted therefrom for this purpose and adapted for choral use; or it first appeared in a collection of Psalms and was borrowed by the editors of the Nebi'im to supply a suitable close to the little Book of Habakkuk. Recent critics generally prefer the latter explanation, and regard this hymn, like Zeph. 3 14-20 (see pp. 38–39) or Isa. 12 (see Vol. II, p. 54), as a poetical addendum attached to the prophet's work to give it a more edifying conclusion. This case is distinguished from the others named by the express assertion of Habakkuk's authorship in the separate title (3 1), the title being such as would be naturally prefixed in transferring the piece from the roll of the prophet to the psalm-collection in which for a time it found a place; compare the titles of Pss. 17, 86, 90, 102, 142, also Ps. 72 20. We are content to leave the question undecided, with a strong leaning toward the traditional view.

This splendid Ode is a meditation on the grandeur of Jehovah, and deserves to be counted with the Song of Miriam in Exod. 15 and of Deborah in Judges 5, with Ps. 18, and Job 40, 41, as amongst the masterpieces of Hebrew poetry in this order. The object of praise is the cove-

nant God of Israel, whose majesty was witnessed above all in the deliverance of His people from Egypt. This is in effect a psalm of the Exodus. That glorious "doing" Jehovah is besought, at the outset, to "renew [revive] in the midst of the years" (2)—at this present juncture of distress and helplessness. Such an appeal was suitable to any period of depression in Israelite history; no clear allusion is made to the Exile, nor to any later crisis than Habakkuk's time. The text of the poem is obscure, and probably defective in a number of places; its musical adaptation may have led to some confusion of reading. As in other Old Testament theophanies, the glory of God exhibited in material nature is enlisted to heighten the glory displayed in His people's redemption (comp. Pss. 18, 19, 68 7. 8, Isa. 51 15. 16, etc.): Israelite monotheism involves this unity of the Creator and Redeemer-God. On the same postulate the miracles of Jesus rest. The forces of the external world, held at Jehovah's command, are sympathetically moved when He steps forth to His grand historic acts of salvation.

It is difficult to draw either from the contents or style of the poem any positive inference as to its period and origin. There is little in the way of common idiom or vocabulary to build upon,

in proof of a single authorship of prophecy and psalm. Hab. 3 is lyrical, Hab. 1 and 2 dramatic in structure. A like vividness of imagination and poignancy of phrase are manifest in both compositions; the author's mind appears to move in each by a succession of illuminating flashes, of sudden starts and revulsions of feeling, yet with a certain logical continuity behind these impulses. The psalm, like the prophecy, comes from a visionary, a contemplative soul; in both sections of the Book one observes the religious subjectivity common to Habakkuk with Jeremiah (see p. 156) and characteristic of the epoch, the disposition of the thinker to read the movements of the time as they are mirrored in his own spirit, and to conceive his revelations in the form of a colloquy with Jehovah; comp. 1 2. 13 2 1 with 3 16-19, also Jer. 15 15-21, etc., and see pp. 76-78 below.

It is possible to read the theophany of vv. 3-15 as a description of *the expected coming of Jehovah* for Israel's deliverance[1] given in colours drawn from the Exodus (the Hebrew perfects being read as "prophetic perfects"), rather than the poetical rendering of the Exodus itself. By this con-

[1] The marginal reading of the Revisers in ver. 13ff, "Thou art come for the salvation of Thy people," &c., sustains this view.

struction Kirkpatrick would link ch. 3 closely to the foregoing context.[1] He finds in 3 2 the prophet's plea against delay, such as the words of 2 3 had intimated, in the fulfilment of Babylon's doom, which has been virtually pronounced in 2 5-19. "The answer to his prayer flashes upon him in a moment. . . . The recollection of the past is a ground of hope for the future. . . . He who once wrought these wonderful works for His people will not fail to work the like again in His own time and His own way" (comp. Ps. 71 19. 20). So while the prophet "trembles" at the vision, "he learns the secret that will give him patience—nay more, rejoicing in the day of trouble (16-19), when the land lies utterly desolate from the Chaldæan invasion, he can endure as seeing Him who is invisible." Thus interpreted, "the prayer of Habakkuk" forms a natural, if not indispensable, close to "the oracle of Habakkuk."[2]

But chap. 3 supplies the complement to chs. 1 and 2 in another respect. It carries with it *reproof*, as well as comfort. Habakkuk has dared in 1 13-17, like Job when under the lash,

[1] *Doctrine of the Prophets*, Lecture X.

[2] In his recent essay, *Das Buch Habakuk* (Tübingen), B Duhm contends for the unity of the three chapters; see p. 49 above.

to "reply against God"—indeed, in 2 1 he takes up the attitude of one who has *posed* the Almighty!—the presumption could hardly pass uncorrected. The terrible majesty in which Jehovah clothes Himself to the prophet's vision, makes his soul quake to its centre. Habakkuk's scepticism is rebuked, in a similar fashion to that of Job, by the sublime theophany with which Jehovah winds up the long debate between the patriarch and his exasperating friends. The trustfully submissive conclusion of the ode (vv. 16-19) expresses the mood that should result from the struggle through which Habakkuk's mind has passed. This book in fact rehearses, on a smaller scale and from its specific point of view, the problem worked out later in the great drama of Job.

Some interpreters, holding the unity of Oracle and Prayer, regard vv. 17-19 as an ending tacked on to the unfinished, or mutilated, ode, which has been borrowed, it is suggested, from an unknown psalm written in time of famine. But ver. 17 is a country lover's picture of utter desolation, such as the poet of vv. 3-15 may well enough have drawn. The song dies away into plaintive yet joyous acquiescence in Jehovah's will:

> Yet as for me, in Jehovah I will rejoice;
> I will exult in the God of my salvation!

Jehovah is my strength, and He hath made my feet like
unto hinds' feet;
And over the heights He directs my way! (19)

Thus the prophet at last treads firmly where he had faltered. These lines are his final response to the oracle given him in 2 4; they express a perfect reconciliation to Jehovah's will, and a perfect confidence in His promised salvation; they breathe the spirit by which "the servant of Jehovah" in suffering Israel will "live" through the worst distresses. Should internal evidence compel us to read ch. 3 as a post-exilic product, the compiler would then appear to have annexed it to this Book with a skill and insight truly inspired.

The name and title of this eighth in the succession of "the Twelve" tell us very little about the author. *Habakkuk* (Hebrew *Chabaqqúq*; in the LXX *'Αμβακούμ*, as if for *Chabbaqúq* or *-qúm*) is a solitary personal name, derived from a root meaning *to embrace, enfold*. The existence of a kindred noun in Assyrian is one of the reasons leading the German Assyriologist Peiser, writing lately on this Book, to locate the author in Nineveh.[1] Nothing is known of the prophet's

[1] Peiser, agrees with Budde in reading the prophecy (chs. 1, 2) as a denunciation of the Assyrians, threatening them with destruction by the Chaldæans. By carrying the

family or dwelling-place. He appears to be a Judæan, with a wide outlook upon the politics of his time and feeling an intense horror for the Chaldæan rule over Judah and the neighbouring lands, whose little Book is "unrivalled in its harmonious union of passion and reflectiveness" (McCurdy).

In the absence of genuine tradition, Jewish fable has embellished the fame of Habakkuk. The legends about him—the most notable of them contained in the Apocryphal *Bel and the Dragon* (2 33-39)—are historically worthless. The romance just referred to bears in the LXX the superscription, "From the prophecy of Ambakoum, son of Jesus (Joshua), of the tribe of Levi."

We will now analyse the Book, as follows:

A. The Prophecy of the Rise and Ruin of the Chaldæan Empire, chaps. 1, 2.

This falls into two parts: *The Dialogue* between

date back to 625 he obviates, or at least reduces, the fatal objection to Budde's theory (see p. 51). An American Professor, W. R. Betteridge, has carried the same line of explanation further by making Habakkuk synchronize with Isaiah and fixing on 701 B.C., the epoch of Sennacherib's invasion, for the occasion of the oracle. The difficulties which these conjectures encounter are patent. Prof. A. S. Peake gives a clear account of the criticism of Habakkuk in Appendix A to his valuable book on *The Problem of Suffering in the Old Testament.*

the prophet and Jehovah, 1 2–2 4; and *the Taunt-song* over the doomed Chaldæans, 2 5-20.

I. *The Dialogue held by the prophet with Jehovah* consists of two questions addressed to God, and answered in turn by Him. The answer to his first appeal dismays Habakkuk, and calls forth a second, more poignant question, ch. 1 2–2 4 :

1. The prophet's complaint to Jehovah against the wickedness of his people, 1 2-4.

2. Jehovah's answer, that He is raising up the Chaldæans to chastise them, 5-11.

(*a*) Attention called to Jehovah's incredible work going on amongst the nations, 5—viz. that He is *raising up the Chaldæans*, who are seen marching to empire, 6.

(*b*) Description of their character and forces, 7-10.

(*c*) Assurance that their passing will be swift, like their coming, since they are guilty, 11.

3. The prophet's second appeal, against Jehovah's use of such agents for His holy purposes, 1 12–2 1.

(*a*) The prophet recalls Jehovah's eternity, who is the Holy One and Israel's Rock, 12.

(*b*) This emboldens him to ask how a God so pure can regard complacently the rise of a power so evil? 13.

(*c*) Is not God Himself thus treating men like fishes or mere insect-swarms? 14.

(*d*) For the new power He has set up does just this; it deifies its own brute force and instruments of murder, 15-17.

(*e*) The prophet, ascending his tower of contemplation, waits for God's answer, 2 1.

4. Jehovah's second answer, given in a brief oracle, 2 2-4.

(*a*) The prophet is to publish the response, inscribing it in large, legible characters, 2.

(*b*) It works out its fulfilment, but needs time and patience, 3.

(*c*) *The oracle:* to the effect that pride goes before a fall, while righteousness is imperishable holding fast to God, 4.

II. *The Taunt-song of the oppressed Nations over the Fall of the Chaldæans*, into which the prophet breaks with a quick revulsion from his despondency, ch. 2 5-20. After the first verse, he puts his taunts into the mouth of the trampled peoples:

1. Woe to the arrogant and insatiate world-robber! 5-8.

2. Woe to him who sacrifices all others to his own security! 9-11.

3. Woe to the builder who lays his walls in blood, and spends the toil of nations on heaping fuel for God's judgement-fires! 12-14.

4. Woe to the debaucher of mankind, and the violator of nature! 15-17.

5. Woe to the multiplier of idols! 19. 18.

The song sublimely ends, silencing the tumult of the peoples:

"Jehovah is in the temple of His holiness;
Hush, before Him, all the earth!" (20)

God's "temple" here is the palace of heaven, from

which, in ch. 3, the prophet images Him riding forth for the redemption of His chosen.[1]

B. The Psalm of Jehovah's Manifestation in Redemption, chap. 3.

1. The prophet, fearful yet trustful, appeals once more to Jehovah—no longer questioning, but humbly *praying* that He would "renew His work" and blend His "wrath" toward Israel with "mercy," 2.

2. In answer, Jehovah appears, coming forth as of old to make war for His people, 3-15:

(*a*) The splendour of this theophany, as of the sun marching from the east, 3. 4.

(*b*) The powers of destruction Jehovah wields—pestilence, lightnings—shattering the mountains and terrifying the peoples, 5-7.

(*c*) In no displeasure against nature (8)—though she trembles through all her frame (10. 11)—but in wrathful, pitying love toward His own Jehovah proceeds on this grand expedition, 9. 12-15.

(The movements of thought in this section are in a splendid confusion that defies analysis).

3. The prophet's final acquiescence, 16-19.

(*a*) The majesty of God, whom he had dared to question, overwhelms him, 16.

(*b*) He dare not doubt, however appearances belie God's promise, 17.

(*c*) He will not submit merely; he will henceforth rejoice and be strong in Jehovah, 18. 19.

[1] Those who treat chap. 3 as a late supplement to Hab. 1 and 2, generally suppose 2 20 to have been inserted as a link between the two pieces. If so, this has been done with a subtle art truly wonderful in a compiler.

CHAPTER XXIII

AN OBSCURE EPISODE IN PROPHECY: ZECHARIAH 12–14

Obscurity of Zech. 12–14—Views of Advocates of Unity of chs. 9–14—Improbability of Origin in Grecian Period—Chs. 12–14 and the Last Days of Jerusalem—"In that Day"—Expected Overthrow of Besiegers—Public Repentance—Death of "the Shepherd"—Second Vision of the Siege—Punishment of Non-conforming Heathen—Chap. 14 13, 14 misplaced—Standpoint of the Prophet—Prominence of the House of David—Sins of the Time—The Earthquake in Uzziah's Reign—The Mourning of Hadadrimmon—Contrast between Author of Zech. 12–14 and Jeremiah—Fluctuations of Hope and Fear—Relation to Ezekiel—Topographical Data—Priestly Feeling of Writer—"Holiness to Jehovah"—Organized Repentance—A Martyred Prophet—Schism between Judah and Jerusalem.

CHAPTERS 12–14 of the Book of Zechariah form a perplexing episode in Hebrew prophecy. They bear no title; their occasion and purpose have been left undefined by author and editors; the critics are agreed only in the

opinion that they cannot be ascribed, any more than chs. 9–11, to the Zechariah of the first eight chapters. The reasons given previously, in Ch. IX of the first volume of this work, for referring Zech. 9–11 to another writer than the post-exilic Zechariah, apply equally to the prophecies before us. No new advocate of the literary unity of the canonical "Zechariah" has appeared (beside those named on p. 194 of Vol. I); and the arguments for separation first advanced by Newcome in 1785, have gained almost universal acceptance.

Ch. 12 1 begins, like 9 1, with the heading "The burden (*massa'*) of the word of Jehovah," purporting to introduce a new prophecy—whether proceeding from the same period and the same hand as the foregoing "burden" is the question. If we were right in referring chs. 9–11 to the age of Isaiah, a third author must be found for chs. 12–14; since *the death of Josiah*, to all appearance, is alluded to in 12 11. The critics who maintain the unity of chs. 9–14, assign the whole book so constituted (whose author is named accordingly the "Deutero-Zechariah") to late post-exilic times: Dr Kirkpatrick, *e.g.*, dates it in the fifth century and the Persian age (between First Zechariah and Malachi); Drs B. Stade and G. A. Smith, in the third century

under the Greek dominion; Dr Marti,[1] with others, in the Maccabæan age. Dr Nowack, who writes on the Book of Zechariah in Hastings' *Dictionary of the Bible*,[2] discovers four separate authors, all of Grecian times, in Zech. 9–14; Wellhausen, in the *Encyclopædia Biblica*, sees "two well-marked divisions"—chs. 9–11 (adding 13 7 9) and chs. 12–14—the former of which he identifies with "the first third of the second century before Christ" when Judæa was coming under the power of the Seleucid kings of Syria,[3] the latter with the Maccabæan rising—and this chiefly because of the allusion in 12 5-7 to the deliverance to be won for Jerusalem by "the chieftains of Judah."

The history of the Old Testament Canon raises, however, a decided presumption against the probability that any such addition was made to the Nebi'im much later than 300 B.C.[4] This

[1] *Das Dodeka-propheton*, in the *Kurzer-Handcommentar z. alten Testament*.

[2] Reproducing here the Introduction to his exposition in the *Handkommentar z. alten Testament* (*Kleine Propheten*). The "Kurzer Handcommentar" and "Handkommentar" are rival German commentaries, of much the same character—critical, concise, and finished in scholarship.

[3] See, on this period, Dr R. W. Moss's *From Malachi to Matthew* in this series.

[4] See Ryle's *The Canon of the O.T.*, pp. 118–123; also *O.T. Canon* in Hastings' *D.B.*

objection seems fatal to Marti's and Wellhausen's theories, which rest moreover on a slender basis of correspondence with the epochs supposed, and involve much conjecture and straining of the text throughout. We should look sceptically at the attempts made by recent leading critics to refer prophetic writings to the dim and ignoble times of the later Persian and Greek dominion. The obscurity of that period witnesses to the low ebb of Judæan national life; literature and life flourish or decay together. The Israelite genius was under an eclipse; memorable deeds and memorable utterances alike were wanting. The Books of Ecclesiastes and of Chronicles afford a measure of the capacity of this decadent age, and an index to its style and trend of thought. At the same time the darkness supplies a region in which speculation operates the more freely, since the data for controlling it are wanting. The two and a half centuries after Malachi have served as a dumping-ground for inconvenient and unattached Old Testament documents. The Hebrew style, the literary power, the prophetic force and freshness, the spiritual atmosphere of Books like Joel and Zechariah 9–14, are such as we have no reason to credit to the post-Ezraite times, when the legalistic scribe and the half-hellenized sceptic were the typical representatives of Jewish culture.

In accounting for "Deutero-Zechariah" we find ourselves obliged to fall back on the views of the earlier critics—Newcome, Ewald, Knobel, Bleek, Riehm—which are still stoutly upheld by Strack[1] and Orelli, to the effect that (1) the whole of Zech. 9–14 is pre-exilic; but (2) while Zech. 9–11 belong to the last days of Samaria (see Vol. I, Ch. IX), Zech. 12–14 is a product of *the last days of Jerusalem* before its overthrow by Nebuchadrezzar, and the writer of these chapters was a contemporary of Habakkuk and Jeremiah. We are aware of the difficulties attaching to this hypothesis; but it is the only assumption which sets the writing in question on historical ground, and supplies a basis for its continuous interpretation. Let us survey the contents of this strange piece of prophecy; after doing this we shall be better able to judge of its scope, and of the situation that gave birth to it.

The phrase "in that day" runs like a refrain through the three chapters, heard in 12 3. 4. 6. 8. 9. 11, in 13 1. 2. 4, in 14 1. 4. 6. 8. 9. 13. 20. 21: each succeeding movement, and almost every item of description, is thus punctuated. For the seer beholds "the day" immediately approaching which prophecy had so long foretold—"the great day of Jehovah";

[1] In his *Einleitung in das A. T.*—a concise and accurate handbook, written from the conservative critical standpoint.

his vision accordingly mingles in the liveliest way, and to a degree that makes discrimination very difficult, the environing conditions with the ideal colours of Messianic judgement and triumph furnished by earlier Jewish apocalyptic[1] and enriched from his own imagination. There is an awful crisis closely impending, that dominates the horizon and inspires both his oracles (12 1–13 6 and 14 1-21)—it is *the siege of Jerusalem.*

I. *First vision of the siege.*

(*a*) In ch. 12 1-9 this siege is described as ending in *the overthrow of the hostile nations*[2]: "all the nations of the earth shall be gathered together against her" (3); but they are destined to fail, for Jehovah "will make Jerusalem a cup of reeling unto all the peoples round about" (2), and "will defend the inhabitants of Jerusalem," making "the weak amongst them as David, and the house of David as God" (8); thus He "will seek to destroy all the nations that come against Jerusalem" (9). Beside the image of the "cup of reeling," which with variations is common to the prophets of the early sixth century (comp.

[1] See the remarks on Joel, Vol. I, pp. 111–115; also on Zephaniah in this volume, pp. 27–8.

[2] Between 12 2 and 3 it seems likely that 14 13. 14 originally stood; see pp. 89 and 105.

Jer. 25 15-17, Hab. 2 16, Ezek. 23 32-34), the seer employs in his graphic way another simile peculiar to himself: he sees the city as "a burdensome stone to all the peoples" (3)—"the figure of Jerusalem as a boulder, deeply embedded in the soil, which tears the hands that seek to remove it, is a most true and expressive summary of the history of heathen assaults upon her" (G. A. Smith). The part played by *Judah* in the abortive siege is the puzzling feature of this oracle; we reserve the consideration of it to the end of the Chapter.

(*b*) Chap. 12 10–13 6. The deliverance of Jerusalem will be followed "in that day" by *an act of repentance on the part of the city*, headed by the royal and priestly families (12 10-14); in consequence of this "there shall be a fountain opened to the house of David and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem for sin and for uncleanness" (13 1); as a part of which cleansing, "the names of the idols," together with "the prophets and the unclean spirit," are to "pass out of the land" (2). The destruction of the false prophets is described with dramatic zest, and 13 3-6 reads like a lively illustration of Jeremiah 23.

Chap. 13 7-9 is a disconnected fragment, from which the catchword "in that day," that runs through the context of chs. 12–14, is missing.

It dwells on the tragic death of some religious leader in Israel, one so exalted and near to God that Jehovah calls him "My shepherd and the man that is My fellow (*or* intimate)." This calamity will result in the destruction of two-thirds of the people; the residue will pass through the fire refined, and will thereafter cleave to Jehovah. We know of no event to which this little prophecy can be so naturally attached as *the death of Josiah* in 608 B.C.; but we are left to conjecture respecting the reference. Probably the idea of the saved "remnant" (transmitted from Isaiah), which is common to this passage with 14 1. 2, suggested its insertion where it stands. On the other hand, a number of critics, including Ewald and Wellhausen, suppose the isolated verses to have slipped out of their proper place *at the end of ch. 11*, since they resume the figure of "Jehovah's shepherd" which pervades 11 4–17 (see Vol. I, p. 217). But the simile was almost a commonplace of prophecy; and 13 7-9 is in substance incongruous with the conclusion of ch. 11, which invokes Jehovah's vengeance on some "*worthless* shepherd." There exists a sacred link between the author of this stray oracle and the "earlier Zechariah" of chs. 9–11, in the fact that both were in our Lord's thoughts during His passion:

from Zechariah 9 9 He took direction for His Messianic entry into Jerusalem; Zech. 13 7 He quoted as He walked down to Gethsemane, in making excuse for the desertion of His disciples—"I will smite the shepherd, and the sheep of the flock shall be scattered abroad" (Matt. 26 31, Mark 14 27). Supposing *Josiah* the smitten shepherd of 13 7, this devoted son of David became, as he well deserved to be, a type of the suffering Christ.

II. Chap. 14 opens with *a second vision of Jerusalem besieged* by "all the nations (heathen)."

(*a*) But this time *the city is taken*, and half of its people are led away captive (vv. 1. 2). The catastrophe is stated in concise matter-of-fact terms, with no lamentation and no moralising. As before, the enemy is not named; but he is one who has pressed "all nations" into his service; their assault represents the combined forces of heathendom.

(*b*) The siege having thus ended with the overthrow of His city, *Jehovah delivers His counter-stroke* (3-11): "Then shall Jehovah go forth and war against the nations." He will fight, however, not with military arms, but by effecting great convulsions of nature, which are set forth somewhat in the manner of Habakkuk 3 3-11 (see pp. 70, 78). He cleaves through the

mount of Olives a deep valley running east and west (4.5); He turns night for Jerusalem into perpetual day (6.7; comp. Isa. 30 26 and 60 19, 20; Rev. 21 25); He makes the droughty city a source of "living waters" that flow to both seas, east and west, through all seasons of the year (8; comp. Joel 3 18, Isa. 33 21, Ezek. 47 1-12, Rev. 22 1); He levels the hilly, broken land north and south of the site into a plain, from which the city will rise lofty and secure with her ring of walls and towers and her replenished population (10.11). Enthroned in this wondrous New Jerusalem, "Jehovah shall reign over the whole earth: in that day shall Jehovah be one and alone, and His name one and alone" (9; comp. 13 2; also Isa. 2 2-3 19 18. 23. 24, Zeph. 3 9, Mal. 1 11).

(*c*) The above vision of Jerusalem's salvation *after* her capture concludes with *the threat of a fearful plague*, visiting both man and beast, *on the rebellious heathen* who warred against her, and who show their persistence in enmity by refusing "to keep the feast of tabernacles" and "to worship the king, Jehovah of hosts, at Jerusalem" (12.15-19); and with *the promise* that *everything in Jerusalem*, from the dreaded war-horses to the common kitchen-utensils, *shall be holy unto Jehovah*, and "there shall no more be

a Canaanite in the house of Jehovah of hosts" (20. 21).

Vv. 13. 14 interrupt the connexion in which they stand. They carry us back to the siege of Jerusalem, and would be quite intelligible if read after 12 2—their proper place, according to the view of many critics. They supply the missing account of the effect on "the peoples," and on Judah, of "the cup of reeling" which we see administered in 12 2.

There is much in the standpoint and outlook of the seer of these two visions that is peculiar to himself, and some things that, as they stand, quite baffle explanation. But the chief landmarks of his position seem to be those of the age of Jeremiah and the last days of Jerusalem, between 608 and 586 B.C. To begin with, the prophet's solicitude throughout is for "Judah and Jerusalem"—no longer, as in chs. 9–11 (see Vol. I, pp. 201, 208–210), for "Ephraim and Judah." *A great siege of Jerusalem*, for which the heathen are gathering round and on the issue of which turns the future of God's kingdom, forms the primary subject of the whole deliverance. This conflict is treated in imaginative style, but one cannot suppose the siege itself to be imaginary; this would be to remove the

substratum of the prophecy and to make it a mere work of fancy—an interpretation incompatible with the strong passion and vivid realism of the composition. The prophet has an actual crisis in the fate of Jerusalem before him. Setting aside the Maccabæan epoch—which lay quite beyond the period of the Nebi'im, and is excluded by the gravest incongruities—we know of two actual sieges of crucial moment in Old Testament times,—that of Sennacherib in 701 and of Nebuchadrezzar in 587–6 B.C. In view of 12 11, the latter of these two dates is alone possible. To the seer's view, Jerusalem is still unfallen: the Maccabæan rising, on the other hand, began with Jerusalem in the hands of the heathen; the struggle of the patriots was for its *recovery*. In the first vision he expects that she will stand, as hitherto, inviolable (12 2. 3; comp. Obad. 17. 21, Joel 3 12-17, Isa. 29 1-8, 37 35, Pss. 46 and 48)—this is not at all the post-exilic strain. The second vision (ch. 14) amends the first: the prophet now foresees "the city taken, the houses rifled, the women ravished, and half the city going forth into captivity" (2). The captivity of Jerusalem is for him therefore still in the future; he nowhere alludes to any distant exiles.

The prominence of "the house of David,"

which appears at the head of the people both in battle and in supplication (12 7–13 1), speaks for the days when the monarchy was standing and the welfare of city and nation was involved in its leadership; comp. Isa. 7 13, Zeph. 1 8, Jer. 21 11. 12. It is true, as against this inference, that *the king* remains unmentioned; but this silence may be accounted for by the character of Josiah's unworthy sons, in whose reigns power and responsibility rested with "the house" more than the nominal ruler; hence in the Book of Jeremiah "the princes" constantly figure "beside the king"; Zephaniah, during Josiah's minority, equally ignores the king and threatens "the princes" (see p. 25).

The two great sins from which "the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem" require to be cleansed are, first, *idolatry* (13 2; comp. Mic. 5 13-15, Isa. 2 8. 18 31 6. 7, Jer. 2 26-28 7 17-20 etc., Zeph. 1 4-6, Ezek. 14 1-8 18 etc.); and secondly, *false and apostate prophecy*—evils conspicuous in Jeremiah's and Ezekiel's denunciations uttered on the eve of Jerusalem's fall (see Jer. 5 31 23 9-40, Ezek. 13; comp. Mic. 3 7). Here at least the prophet speaks to the facts and deals with the vices of his own day; to question this is to take away all purpose from his work. But if there be anything certain about post-exilic

Jerusalem, it is that she was weaned from idolatry and that this had ceased to be the national danger. Add to this, that from the Ezra-Nehemian era, and increasingly as time went on, the profession of the prophet gave way to that of the scribe and priest; it is a voice out of the Maccabæan age which complains, "There is no more any prophet" (Ps. 74 9). "Traces" of the above corruptions, it is argued, appear in the days after the Exile: Zech. 13 2-6 speaks of the wiping out of no mere *traces*, but of the prevalent and crying uncleanness of the times. One has only to turn to the Book of Malachi following this, to realize how different was the moral atmosphere of the post-exilic from that of the pre-exilic Jerusalem, which we are still conscious of breathing here.

Zech. 12–14 contains two striking allusions to local events, both referring to the past—*how far* past we can only guess. The reminder of "the earthquake in the days of Uzziah king of Judah," in 14 5, is unmistakable. The words "ye shall flee like as ye fled" at first sight appear to be addressed to the generation who experienced this memorable calamity (which furnished a date also for the Book of Amos; see Vol. I, p. 127), whereas this prophecy is a century and a half later at the least. The reminiscence is, at any

rate, more natural before the Exile, while Jerusalem preserved a continuous memory. The overthrow by Nebuchadrezzar effected such a dislocation in the city-consciousness, that the comparison, when regarded as made in a later age, assumes an artificial and antiquarian character.

The other local allusion, which we have already noted (12 11)—"In that day there shall be a great mourning in Jerusalem, *as the mourning of Hadadrimmon*[1] in the valley of Megiddon"—has received more than one interpretation. Beside the familiar explanation, which finds this example in the grief of the Judæans over Josiah's fall at the battle of Megiddo (2 Kings 23 29. 30; 2 Chron. 35 24), there is the theory of Hitzig, endorsed by Robertson Smith and others, who saw the exemplary "mourning" in *the annual lamentation* of the Syrians *over Adonis* (identified with "Hadad," and this

[1] This word occurs nowhere else. It is presumed to be a local name. "Hadad"—an Aramæan title of deity—occurs in several non-Israelite personal names (see Gen. 36 35, etc., 2 Sam. 8 3, 1 Kings 11 14, 1 Chron. 1 30). The LXX translators may have had simply "Rimmon" (pomegranate) before them, which is a rather common place-name (comp. 14 10 below). Jerome reports finding an "Adadremmon" near the site of Jezreel, and this has been identified with the modern village of "Rumanneh." But Jerome's statement is unsupported, and the identification is geographically questionable.

Aramæan deity again with the "Rimmon" of 2 Kings 5 18); but it is improbable to the verge of impossibility, that the Hebrew author—this author particularly, in view of 13 2a—would have allowed himself to liken Jerusalem's lamenting for its sin before Jehovah to that notorious heathen celebration: see Ezek. 8 13. 14 upon this subject (where "Tammuz" = the classical Adonis). The mention of Megiddo is good ground for connecting the "great mourning" with Josiah's fall, whose tragic end his people, after his burial at Jerusalem (2 Kings 23 30), may well have commemorated in following years on the scene of the disaster. But subsequently to the fall of Jerusalem, the remembrance of this loss, so keen at the time when the prophet writes, was eclipsed by more awful calamities. The earthquake of Uzziah's time was a unique event in Palestine, to be kept in mind for generations. Not so with Josiah's death in battle: if the allusion to this occurrence were *certain*, we might build upon it as being by itself a sure pre-exilic datum.

While the features of Zech. 12–14 thus far observed go to associate the author with the epoch of Josiah's sons, there are things here to which we find no parallel in other records of the time—some of them surprising in a contemporary and fellow-worker of Jeremiah. Our

author expected at first a favourable termination to the siege of Jerusalem (12 1-9), already commenced or approaching. He predicts the defeat of the beleaguering nations in highly coloured language, much after the style of Joel 3 9 17[1] (see Vol. I, pp. 111–113). Attending this undeserved mercy, in the prophet's fond hopes, a signal repentance will take place on the part of rulers and citizens. Jeremiah formed a more despairing and, as it proved, a truer judgement of the state of the nation; from the outset he foretold nothing but ruin (1 13-18). Later on, this prophet, convinced by events, came round to the same view (for one cannot doubt that the seer of 14 1. 2 and of 12 8 is one person). Even so, he passes lightly over the city's fall: his thoughts are full of the deliverance lying beyond, and of the splendour of

[1] Joel's vision of the slaughter of the heathen assailing Jerusalem is recalled by the Judæan crisis of the sixth century, and is reproduced in new colours by the visionary of Zech. 12 2 (14 13. 14)-9. Reasons were given in Ch. VI of Vol. I for rejecting the prevalent critical view as to the late post-exilic date of Joel. The two Books—Joel and Zech. 12-14 — must stand or fall together in this respect. The interpreters who treat these as products of the closing age of Israelite prophecy, see in them imitative compositions wearing a studied archaic stamp—a judgement based on *à priori* theories as to the post-exilic origin of the "priestly" and the "apocalyptic" ideas in Judaism, against which, in the case of these writings, the literary sense rebels.

God's final kingdom in Zion (14 3-11). He is an eminently eschatological prophet, able to project himself away from the miserable present and to live by imagination in the light of "the latter days" (Isa. 2 2). He was an optimist, Jeremiah a pessimist, by temperament; he is an idealist, Jeremiah a stern realist. His intuition is poetical and apocalyptic, and moves in a visionary world created in part for him already by Joel and Isaiah; Jeremiah is prosaic, downright, sternly ethical, brushing aside all conventions and preconceptions that do not square with the remorseless facts of the time. In the last chapter we discovered Habakkuk viewing the Chaldæan conquest in another light, and moralising upon it in quite another sense, from Jeremiah: we need not be surprised that a third contemporary teacher of Israel interpreted the same historic crisis on lines diverging from those of both his inspired companions. These differing doctrines are not for that reason incompatible. The representations of Jeremiah have so preoccupied our minds and determined our conceptions of the attitude and message of prophecy at the epoch of the Fall of Jerusalem, that it is difficult—even more so than in Habakkuk's case—to realize the legitimacy of this writer's point of view. Yet it is necessary that we should do so, if we are

to understand the tenacity with which Isaiah's doctrine of the inviolability of Zion continued to be held, and the force with which this idea re-asserted itself after the Exile and wrought in the re-creation of the Jewish nationality and the resurrection of the Holy City.

The fluctuations of thought thus marked, as between chs. 12 and 14, were natural enough in the course of the years 608–586 B.C. At some moments Jeremiah himself had gleams of hope (see Jer. 22 1-4 26 3); and the act of reformation described in Jer. 34 8-10, for the short time it lasted, must have encouraged an anticipation of Jehovah's interference, even at the eleventh hour. One can imagine Zech. 12 1-13 2 being delivered on the spur of this occasion, when "the spirit of grace and of supplication" did seem for the nonce to have come on king and people, and they professed and actually began to "do that which was right in" Jehovah's "eyes." The promise of escape given as from Jehovah, in ch. 12 3 ff., was tacitly contingent on Jerusalem's conversion, and lapsed when that conversion proved abortive. Ezekiel in ch. 33 has given us the rationale of such unfulfilled predictions; he justifies the apparent contradiction of God's alternate threats and promises, possibly with this recent instance before his mind. Noticeable variations occur in

Isaiah's forecasts of the issue of Sennacherib's siege: at one juncture, the levity of the citizens drove him to foretell the very worst fate for them (in Isa. 22 1-14; see Vol. II, pp. 63–65); for all that, in the end he announced, and speedily witnessed, a glorious deliverance. Isaiah rose from fear to hope; this messenger of God sank from hope to despair, when the prospect of amendment proved delusive. Prophecy is not the utterance of hard-and-fast predictions, expressing the decrees of a mere Divine sovereignty; it springs from the free intercourse of the living God with living men and changes its voice with their changing disposition, "judging the house of Israel every one according to his ways."

To many critics the ideal (apocalyptic) picture of renovated Jerusalem in 14 4-11 yields evidence of an imitating hand, and therefore of a late origin for the work to which it belongs. On the contrary, we recognise in this passage the air and stamp of originality. Its terse vigour, its bold traits of description, and the fine poetic combination of its elements belong to the richer strain of Hebrew writing, to the time of the creators and not the copyists. Of its four features—the great valley cleaving the Mount of Olives, the perpetual sunshine, the double perennial stream rising in Jerusalem, and the plain

levelled around the mountain-city—the first and last are peculiar to this landscape ; they form signal improvements, it should be observed, upon Jerusalem's natural surroundings in respect both of defence and fertility, such as would be suggested by the experience of a siege. This is still more true of the third distinction of the New Jerusalem, its copious "living waters." This great desideratum of the existing city is ideally supplied by a succession of prophets—by Joel first (3 18), in another form by Isaiah (33 21; see Vol. II, pp. 121–122), and by Ezekiel (47 1-12) who thinks, however, of the redemption of the eastern wilderness and the Dead Sea by the temple-stream rather than of any advantage to Jerusalem herself. Ezekiel was a great borrower, and it is more probable that his laboured and methodical account of the new river was suggested by the vivid little picture before us, than that the obligation lay on the other side. If our author makes the waters flow both east and west, this is due to his geographical sense, not to a desire to enhance upon Ezekiel. The promise of a nightless day may be a reflexion of Isa. 30 26 ; but if so, it assumes a fresh and touching expression. St John's "new Jerusalem" derives more from Zech. 14 than from any other Old Testament source ; the parallel

prophetic pictures, as we see them, have a parallel historical basis in the double siege and destruction of the Holy City, by Nebuchadrezzar and by Titus.

Five points in the circuit of the city are specified in 14 10, two being named only in this passage and by Jeremiah (20 2 37 13 38 7 31 38),[1] viz. "Benjamin's gate" and "the corner gate" —a coincidence speaking for approximate date— while a third, "the tower of Chanan'el," is known besides only from Jer. 31 38 and Neh. 3 1. The two other points noted in the circumvallation, "the first gate" and "the king's wine-presses," are mentioned nowhere else; the last of these landmarks has a pre-exilic sound. When it is foretold that Jerusalem shall "be inhabited" and shall "dwell in her place," this is because the writer expects the city to be captured forthwith and half emptied (14 2), and is no proof that she now lies in ruins.

The priestly feeling of this prophet, which shows itself by his insisting that the heathen shall attend at the Feast of Tabernacles in token of their submission to Jehovah after His "day"

[1] Vv. 38-40 of Jer. 31 are marked as unauthentic by a number of critics, for reasons that appear slight enough —partly on account of their coincidences with Zech. 14, assumed to be late. The language of ver. 40 is quite Jeremiah's.

of triumph, appears to many a sure sign of late production. Here, however, as in the case of Joel (see Vol. I, pp. 103, 104), it must be maintained that Israelite sacerdotalism was no late, post-exilic development; Hosea and Isaiah demonstrate its existence and strength in early times, by their protests against its errors; the priestly narratives and codes of the Pentateuch, granting their exilic or post-exilic redaction, were the offspring of a long and vigorous development from Moses downward. Ezekiel, contemporary with our author (as we suppose), presents a thorough-going combination of priest and prophet in one person.

"The Feast of Tabernacles" (bearing here, by the way, its Deuteronomic name) was in ancient times "*the* feast of Jehovah" for all Israel (1 Kings 8 2 12 32; comp. Judges 21 19-21), though later it became second in importance to the Feast of Passover. As the vintage festival crowning the agricultural year, "it was common to Israel and the nations round about them,"[1] and therefore lent itself to the purpose of Zech. 14 16. During *the siege*, we can understand how much this feast would be hindered, and how delightful its celebration would appear to those cooped up in city walls. If the prophet wished

[1] See Hastings' *Dictionary of the Bible*, iv. 699*a*.

to depict a future community of worship between Israelite and Gentile, there was no happier way of doing this than by representing all nations as gathered to Jerusalem for the autumn festival. Subsequently to the time of Ezra, more detailed ritual conformity would surely have been demanded from the submissive Gentiles.

The legend "Holiness to Jehovah," that will be read "on the bells of the horses" (14 20), belongs to the priestly Torah (see Exod. 28 36); it was doubtless an old watchword of the priesthood (comp. Mic. 4 13; Isa. 23 18). The notion of the sanctification of Israel's secular life did not originate after the Exile, but lay at the basis of the national covenant (Exod. 19 5. 6); it fills the Law of Holiness (Lev. 19–26), which took shape, according to the critics, under Ezekiel's influence. The *place*, however, not the people, becomes the subject of this consecration; since Jerusalem is made the centre of a world-wide worship of Jehovah (16). For this reason, it appears, the cooking-"pots," needed in preparing the sacrificial meals, must be huge as "the bowls before the altar" (so, after Wellhausen, we understand ver. 20*b*); and "every pot in Jerusalem and in Judah" will be in requisition for this blessed use (21). This is just a priest's way of imagining the throng of feasters

coming up to the house of Jehovah. The inscription on "the bells of the horses" means that even these instruments of invasion, the terror of Israel and a chief aversion of the prophets (see 12_4 10_2; Micah 5_{10}; Hab. 1_8; also Deut. 17_{16}, etc.), will hereafter be pressed into Jehovah's service.

With the priestly habit of mind we may associate the extraordinary picture drawn in 12_{10-14} of a *universal repentance*, the participators in which are distributed into their different "families" (or "clans") in the traditional hereditary method, while "the wives" in each group make their lamentation apart. In Eastern usage women play a prominent and specific part in mournings over the dead (comp. 2 Chron. 35_{25}, Jer. 9_{17-20}; Exod. 19_{15} is, perhaps, also relevant here); and this is the case before us (10). "The family of the house of Levi" takes its place beside the two royal clans; the priestly order is thus named after the manner of Deuteronomy, in which "priests" and "Levites" are identified. The clan of the Shimeites (with Shim'i for name-father; Exod. $6_{16.17}$) was for some reason conspicuous to the writer's mind amongst the Levites. It is interesting to find "the house of Nathan" specified along with "the house of David"; for it was through *Nathan* that the house

of David survived when the leading Solomonic branch became extinct, so that Nathan has the honour to figure in the ancestry of Jesus Christ (Luke 3 31). This is the single occurrence of his name (about half-way) between the genealogies of 2 Samuel (with 1 Chronicles) and Luke; it indicates that the minor Davidic line maintained its pedigree throughout. The existence of *two* royal clans goes to account for the importance attaching to "the princes" during this period; they confront us everywhere in the Book of Jeremiah, and half eclipse the king.

The "mourning" which the prophet looks forward to is an act of penitent remorse for the death of some pious leader, over whom the nation will grieve as one would for a "firstborn" or an "only son." Who this servant of Jehovah was, that had fallen a victim to the blind anger of princes and people, we cannot tell. The text of 12 10 is obscure, and possibly corrupt, at this point.[1] We know from the Book of Jeremiah (26 20-23) of one martyr of the period, slain by Jehoiakim, viz. "'Uriyyah, the son of Shema'yahu

[1] In the received reading, "upon *me* whom they pierced," the small Hebrew letter denoting "me" should probably be deleted, and we may read "upon . . . whom they pierced," recognising a lacuna where the object of the preposition has dropped out.

of Kiryath-y'arim," a disciple of Jeremiah who provoked by too plain speaking "the king, with all his mighty men, and all his princes," and whose extradition from Egypt Jehoiakim took the trouble to secure. This crime inculpated the nation. The whole interests of prophecy were involved in Uriah's murder, and Jeremiah narrowly escaped the like doom. The humiliation prescribed is not too great for so flagrant and public a deed of wrong. If, despite its committal (perhaps not very recent at the time of writing), the city is to be delivered from its besiegers, deliverance can only be looked for on condition that the guilty purge themselves from this dreadful stain of blood.

The most startling circumstance in Zech. 12–14 is *the quarrel between Jerusalem and Judah* plainly signified in 14 14, and presumably implied in 12 2.[1] Supposing such a strife to have arisen, or to be contemplated by the prophet, we understand 12 5 to indicate Judah's relenting toward the mother-city, with whose enemies the country-people at first had taken part (12 2*b* 14 14*a*): "the

[1] We should probably read the last clause of ver. 2 thus, "and Judah also shall be in [take part in] the siege against Jerusalem," omitting the preposition *'al* (*upon* or *against*) before "Judah," comp. the rendering of LXX and Vulgate. Then vv. 13. 14 of ch. 14 come in aptly to carry on the sense of 12 2*b*, and supply the starting-point for the prediction of 12 3-9.

chiefs of Judah shall say in their heart, The inhabitants of Jerusalem are my strength in Jehovah of hosts their God"; they recognise that the ruin of the sacred capital will be fatal to themselves. So they turn on the besiegers in whose camp they were found, and, throwing them into confusion by this unexpected rising, prove to them "like a pan of fire amongst wood and like a torch of fire among sheaves," so that "they devour all the peoples round about" (12 6). Thus the temporary revolt of the Judæan countrymen becomes the salvation of the city instead of being its destruction, and the honour of the victory rests with "the tents of Judah" (7). Such is the only plausible explanation of this most difficult passage. The turn of events the prophet anticipates is, in any case, unique.

We do not hear from any other source of any such rupture between Jerusalem and the Judæans, either after or before the Exile. The relations of city and country in the Maccabæan wars agree with the situation here given in so far that Judah supplied Jerusalem with her deliverers; but the civil strife represented as bringing about the situation of this passage had no counterpart at that time, and Jerusalem was then in possession of the heathen at the outbreak of the war, not

under siege by them (see pp. 89–90 above). At the same time, though we have no proof of actual schism, there were symptoms of contention and conditions tending to breed enmity betwixt the capital and the rest of Judah in the times leading up to 587, which deserve attention. King Amon was assassinated, as it appears from 2 Kings 21 23. 24, by his courtiers at Jerusalem, and the murder was avenged by "the people of the land"—*i.e.* the country-folk—who "made Josiah his son king in his stead." Josiah's reformation, involving the destruction of the local sanctuaries in favour of the great city-temple and the removal of the country priests, seemed an ill return toward those who had raised him to the throne; it brought with it disturbance and loss to the districts affected and a violation of long-cherished rural sentiment and custom, which, though suppressed under his vigorous rule and his powerful religious ascendency, would naturally smoulder in the popular mind and may well have broken out under his successors and when misfortune appeared to mark the centralizing policy with Jehovah's displeasure. Add to this inevitable cause of ill-blood the extravagance of Jehoiakim in costly building —an old grievance of the rurals against the city nobles—which at a time of national poverty

would certainly aggravate rebellious feeling towards the capital. It must be remembered that the writer is *predicting*, and that conditionally, what the future may bring forth. He was probably aware of a bitter temper amongst the tribesmen, that would on occasion burst into open war and might lead them to aid in the first instance the enemies of the throne. As we have seen, events did not follow the course augured in chap. 12 (pp. 97–98), and ch. 14 gives an amended forecast of the future. But there must have been a *vera causa* for the idea entertained in 14 14 (to follow 12 2), that "Judah shall fight against Jerusalem." The expectation of this throws a new light upon the troubles and confusions of the last days of Jerusalem.

Analysis of Zechariah 12–14

The Siege of Jerusalem and After

The Title and Introduction: chap. 12 1 [1]

I. First Vision of the Siege and its Sequel: chap. 12 2–13 6.

1. *Jerusalem made a Cup of Reeling to the Nations*, 12 2-9.

[1] The title is, no doubt, editorial; it is in line with that of 9 1 and of Mal. 1 1; see Vol. I, pp. 191–192. The fine introductory sentence—"Thus saith Jehovah, who stretcheth out

(*a*) Judah sharing in the League against her, 12 2b and 14 13. 14.

(*b*) The Experience of the Besiegers, 12 3. 4.

(*c*) Judah turning on her Allies in Defence of Jerusalem, 5-7.

(*d*) The City's Glorious Deliverance, 8. 9.

2. *The National Repentance and Purification* that ensues, 12 10–13 6.

(*a*) A Mourning over One Slain by the People's Sin, 10. 11.

(*b*) The Royal and Priestly Clans foremost in the Act of Penitence, 12-14.

(*c*) A Fountain opened for Cleansing the Penitents, 13 1.

(*d*) The Land purified from Idolatry, 2.

(*e*) Its False Prophets repudiated and put to Shame, 3-6.

[A fragmentary Oracle relating, perhaps, to *Josiah's death* and the purifying affliction that is to follow it: chap. 13 7-9.]

the heavens and layeth the foundation of the earth, and formeth the spirit of man within him"—is often regarded as an echo of Isa. 42 5 and 48 13 (exilic); but the compactness and impressive force of the passage as it stands here bespeak its originality; Am. 4 13 and Mic. 6 1. 2 are somewhat similar—the latter passage certainly anterior to Zech. 12 1. Hab. 3 develops the thought of the oneness of Jehovah in His works of creation and redemption; see p. 70. This overture accords with the grand imaginative style of the whole piece.

II. Second Vision of the Siege and its Sequel: chap. 14.

1. *The Capture and Sack of the City*, 1. 2.

2. *Jehovah*, in His turn, *declares War against the Nations*, 3.

3. *Great Convulsions of Nature*, amidst which *a New Jerusalem* is born and Jehovah proclaimed "King over all the earth," 4-11:

(*a*) A Valley cleft through the Mount of Olives, 4. 5.

(*b*) Night abolished for Jerusalem's Inhabitants, 6. 7.

(*c*) Perennial rivers flowing east and west from the City, 8.

(*d*) The Country north and south levelled to a Plain, above which the City rises high and secure, 10. 11.

4. *The Plagues striking the Heathen* who refuse to keep the Feast of Tabernacles at Jerusalem, 12. 15 19 [vv. 13. 14 were inserted under I, 1*a*; see p. 89].

5. *Jerusalem's Full Consecration* as the Centre of Jehovah's World-wide Worship, 20. 21.

CHAPTER XXIV

THE BOOK OF JEREMIAH

Loose Structure of the Book—First Publication of Jeremiah's Prophecies—Contents of Roll burnt by Jehoiakim—Place of chap. 1—Second Edition of the Roll—Collection of Royal Oracles—The Fig-baskets—Tenor of chs. 1–25—Later Memoirs of Jeremiah Book of the Future of Israel and Judah—Hopefulness of Jeremiah's Later Teaching—Suspected Interpolations—Restoration of Ephraim—Baruch's Reminiscences of Jeremiah—Stories of the Siege—Jeremiah and the Remnant—Baruch's Collaboration in Authorship—The Book sunk in Euphrates—Against Babylon—The Foreign Oracles (46–49)—Older Oracles incorporated—Order of chapters in LXX—Historical Postscript—Analysis of the whole Book.

THE Book of Jeremiah is the longest in the Bible, and the loosest in its structure; "scarcely another book in the Old Testament gives so much the impression of being thrown together without a plan, as does that of Jeremiah" (Cornill). This impression is modified

by closer examination; but it remains true that, while the contents follow in a general way the chronology of the superscription and the connexion of thought in particular sections is often well maintained, the Book as a whole exhibits no consistent scheme, and the order of time is repeatedly violated without any evident reason for this in the subject-matter. The reader who desires to gain an intelligent grasp of the progress of events and the development of thought and character during the long course of Jeremiah's ministry from the volume as it stands, finds himself much at a loss. His embarrassment is increased when on turning to the Greek version he discovers what appears to be a different edition of the Book, with the chapters running in another order and one-eighth of the Hebrew text missing altogether. The composition of this book of prophecy is a difficult problem; we must reduce its contents to order and set them in the light of the contemporary history, if we wish to apprehend the work of the author as a living whole, to gather the lessons of Jeremiah's life and to weigh the sum of his contributions to the religion of Israel and the building up of the Church of God.

1. Fortunately, the Book itself provides in chap. 36 a clue to its history, which we can

follow for a considerable distance. We learn from ver. 4 that Jeremiah had a secretary *Baruch*[1] ("Barúk ben-Neriyyáh, ben-Machseyáh," 32 12), who at a certain date "wrote from the mouth of Jeremiah all the words of Jehovah, which He had spoken unto him, upon a roll of a book." This was in "the fourth year of Jehoiakim"—the fateful year of the battle of Carchemish (605 B.C.) which gave to Nebuchadrezzar the sceptre of the East (see pp. 55, 65), being the twenty-third year of Jeremiah's ministry (comp. 1 1-4 25 3). The volume referred to was to contain "all the words that" Jehovah "had spoken unto" Jeremiah "against Israel and against Judah, and against all the nations, from the day that" He first "spoke unto" him "up to the present day" (36 2)—it was, in fact, a digest of Jeremiah's prophecies of doom uttered from 628 to 605 B.C. This roll, we presume, formed

[1] Baruch's brother, named Seraiah, accompanied the king Zedekiah on his visit to Babylon in the capacity of "quarter-master" (51 59). It would appear, therefore, that Baruch belonged to the nobility of Jerusalem, a fact which accounts for the warning against *ambition* given to him in 45 5, and helps to explain the protection which Jeremiah repeatedly received, despite his unpopularity and the enmity of the royal court. It may be inferred also from 45 5 that Baruch was in the year 604 a young man, under the temptation to pursue a political career. His devotion to Jeremiah speaks for his self-sacrifice, constancy, and religious spirit.

the nucleus of the Book of Jeremiah. It is possible, and even likely, that Jeremiah had by him notes in writing of his earlier addresses, but he is now for the first time instructed to put together a continuous "book." The expression "all the words" in this memorandum does not signify a verbatim report of Jeremiah's past preaching, but such a rehearsal of its substance as the circumstances permitted; in this reproduction, made for a specific purpose, of speeches delivered some of them twenty years ago, it was inevitable that they should be coloured and their form of presentation affected by the situation of the author at the time of writing.

> Being dictated mainly from memory, prophecies extending over three-and-twenty years cannot have been reproduced exactly as they were spoken. It was the purpose of the prophet to preserve and lay before the people a compend of his ideas and teaching, his judgement upon the past history of the people and on their present condition, and his convictions regarding the inevitable issues in the future, without much regard to the circumstances in which the ideas had been originally expressed. Hence these earlier chapters are fragmentary, and without connexion; passages in the same chapter may belong to different situations (A. B. Davidson)

The roll thus prepared by Baruch contained a

number of sections of "three or four leaves" each[1] (36 23)—it was therefore of considerable compass; but it was not too long for continuous reading to the assembly of the people, not too long to be publicly read three times over, seemingly, in one day—first to the congregation at the temple by Baruch (10), then by Baruch again to the gathering of "princes" (11-15), and lastly, after some interval, by Jehudi to Jehoiakim and the lords in waiting at the winter-palace round the fire (20-26). Now, can we recover this original "book of Jeremiah"? We observe, in attempting to determine its limits, (1) that it was composed of prophecies of rebuke and judgement[2] addressed to communities—"against Israel, etc."; (2) that it was written "from Jeremiah's mouth"—a condition excluding the narratives relating to him in which he figures in the third person; (3) that it covered only the first half of Jeremiah's career, up to the year 605; (4) that it was limited to what could be deliberately read in an hour or two, and within

[1] The meaning of this verse seems to be that the king destroyed the MS. *piecemeal*, cutting off and flinging into the fire three or four leaves at a time, as Jehudi finished reading each section.

[2] This does not forbid the inclusion of incidental passages of entreaty and promise, or confession, such as 3 22-4 2 and 7 3-7.

the patience of a large popular assembly. These conditions are fulfilled, if we identify with the "roll of a book" written out by Baruch and read to the people in 605–4 B.C. chs. 2–6, relating to the pre-reformation days of Josiah's reign; ch. 11 1-14 (or -17), relating to the Covenant of the year 621; chs. 7–10 (excluding 9 23–10 16),[1] occasioned by the crisis of the year 608; and

[1] Chap. 10 17-25 is the immediate continuation of 9 17-22, and the proper conclusion of the great discourse of judgement on Judah beginning in 7 1. 2. The interpolated matter is made up of three disconnected paragraphs: (*a*) 9 23. 24, an apophthegm akin to the five that are strung together in 17 5-13; these may have belonged to some collection of Jeremiah's aphoristic sayings; why this particular aphorism should have been interjected here, it is hard to say. (*b*) 9 25. 26, a short oracle of doom coupling Judah with the nations—circumcised and uncircumcised together—that might have found a place in ch. 25 15-31, but is astray where it stands. The above are true sayings of Jeremiah, but out of place. (*c*) Ch. 10 1-16 is a discourse of different style and type altogether, bearing the distinctive marks of later Jewish literature. It resembles Deutero-Isaiah, Pss. 115 and 135, also Wisdom 14 ff. and Baruch 6 in the Apocrypha; and appears to be addressed to exiled and faithful Jews surrounded by idolatry. Vv. 12-16 reappear in the oracle against Babylon, 51 15-19—a coincidence which gives some clue to the date of this homily. Ver. 11 is *in the Aramaic language* (like Ezra 4 8-6 18 and Dan. 2 4–7 28), as though given for a watchword to be used by Israelites confronting their foreign neighbours. The LXX varies from the Hebrew text in this section more than commonly, the best copies omitting vv. 6 8 and 10, and reading ver. 5 after 9.

ch. 25, the great oracle of 605 B.C., in which the prophet takes round the wine-cup of Jehovah's wrath to "the nations." This makes a compact and fairly homogeneous volume, containing some ten chapters and about six thousand words.[1] It does not seem likely that, for the occasion in view, Jeremiah entered into much detail in his Dooms "against the nations"; the powerful summary of 25 15 ff. would be a sufficient deliverance on this part of the subject for the immediate purpose; it was expanded into the collection of oracles against foreign peoples (46–51), which is placed at the end of the Book (see pp. 139–140).

Chap. 1 might be included in the definition of 36 2, taken with a little latitude, and its addition would not add unreasonably to the matter which Baruch had to read to the temple-multitude; but on the whole this preface seems more suitable for the second edition of the volume, in which there were "added besides many like words" (36 32). The words of 2 1-3

[1] Allowance should be made in this estimate for possible later accretions to the original text. On the other hand, it is possible that the sections of the roll were here and there cut down in the readjustments and adaptations necessary for later editions. It is difficult to think that the covenant-oracle of 11 1-14 (or -17) was not at one time more complete.

form an admirable introduction to the roll as it was first composed for public reading.

2. Having now, conjecturally, recovered from Jehoiakim's brasier the primary book of Jeremiah, let us cast about for the "many like words" that "were added" in re-writing it. The new copy was not provided for use at a single public reading; the authors would be free, therefore, to make additions of any kindred matter worthy of record and necessary for completeness. But the other conditions previously stated still hold good: (1) Jeremiah in dictating to Baruch would, presumably, speak of himself in the first person; (2) the larger book ranged over the years 628–604; (3) it was a book of doom, not of promise, containing in its additions "*like* words" to those already inscribed; and (4), if we are to press the terms of 36 32 strictly, the added matter served to supplement the earlier work, and was not interwoven with it.

Chap. 1 4-19, as we have intimated, supplies the natural introduction to this more permanent collection of Jeremiah's prophecies of judgement. The personal reminiscences which we find scattered through chs. 11–20 of the canonical Book would also find a fitting place in the enlarged edition, since they are, in common with chap. 1,

pieces justificatives, serving to vindicate the prophet's attitude and to explain the necessity laid upon him. The years 605–4 formed a critical epoch for Jeremiah's personal experience no less than for his public mission (see Ch. xxv below), and it was appropriate that he should review, from the position in which he now stands, God's past dealings with his soul and reveal the inner side of the strange ministry he is called to exercise.[1] The autobiographical matter, with accompanying scenes and discourses, that was then added to the original Book of Doom, may have embraced chs. I 1–19, II 1–III 5,

[1] For the similar motive that led Isaiah to write ch. 8 for his second published book, see Vol. II, p. 41.

[2] Ch. II 1–3 we have included, with some doubt, in Jeremiah's first edition. In 2 b the personal and current reminiscence suggested by the LXX. ("It is a land of peace now as at our accident that now will have to it is the price of Jerusalem") is to Jeremiah in fearful amongst the ancient now will be here amongst the powerful enemies in Jerusalem. The translation of Hosea preferred by some critics, gives a similar sense: "It is a land of peace that am Yahweh that now etc." The two remaining paragraphs of vv. 12–13 are probably of later origin, that belong to a time when Judah is already suffering as "a spoiled one" (2), from the other lands around her and "evil neighbours" receive Jehovah's "inheritance" (2a). This happened in Jehoiakim's reign with Nebuchadrezzar, about 604 B.C. see 2 Kings 24. 1, but not earlier, so far as we know.

14 and 15,[1] 16 1-13·16-18[2], 17 1-18[3], 18, 19, 20. Most of the contents of chs. 1–25, as we know them, is thus brought within the scope of the enlarged roll of the book of Jehovah's judgements on Israel and the nations, which terminated with chap. 25.

The second edition of Jeremiah's book above-described stands in the main as at first composed, but has suffered dislocations and the intrusion of later material. In particular, and beside the passages referred to in the footnotes of the last paragraph, chap. 13, containing the two parables

[1] No date is given for "the drought" of ch. 14 1; but it appears from 14 12 18 and 15 7-9 that it followed upon some great defeat in battle—"sword and famine" are together desolating the land. This and other considerations point to an occasion soon after the defeat at Megiddo (608), and early in Jehoiakim's reign.

[2] Vv. 14. 15 of ch. 16 are intruded here, where they interrupt the sense; they are in their proper place in 23 7. 8. Vv. 19-21 are contested by the critics, and may be fairly suspected as a gloss or prophetical annotation.

[3] The earlier paragraphs of ch. 17—viz. vv. 1-4, 5-8, 9 and 10, 11, 12 and 13 stand quite isolated, and do not seem to lead up to the personal passage of vv. 14-18. The first of the above paragraphs is a characteristic Jeremianic message of doom; the four that follow read like a string of apophthegms, and are unique in this author, but not for this reason unauthentic; chap. 9 23. 24 contains an isolated dictum of the same type. Vv. 19-27 again are quite different from anything else in the chapter, and stand alone in the Book; on this passage, see p. 145 below.

of *the spoilt girdle* and *the full wine-jar*,[1] is associated with the captivity of the year 597 by the references of vv. 18. 19,—where "the king and queen-mother" can only mean Jehoiachin and Nehushta (see 22 24-26, and 2 Kings 24 8-16).

Chap. 21 1-10 is chronologically an "aberrant boulder," a fragment from Baruch's memoirs (see pp. 131–132) belonging to the year 589 or thereabouts; it appears to have been inserted here through some later hand, by way of introducing Jeremiah's oracles upon the contemporary kings of Judah, *Zedekiah* being thus added to complete the list. Following upon 21 11-14, which reads as a brief general warning, 22 1-9 was most probably addressed to *Josiah* on his assumption of power; *Jehoahaz* (= Shallum) is the subject of 22 10-12; vv. 13-19 denounce *Jehoiakim*, who is contrasted with his father; while vv. 20-30 are an elegy upon the captive *Jehoiachin*; and ch. 23 1 8 winds up the series by a summary pronouncement on "the evil shepherds" who have

[1] It is a question whether "Euphrates" is not a misrendering of the Hebrew *Perath*, which may have been the name of some hiding-place for the "girdle" in Jeremiah's neighbourhood. If the Euphrates was intended, the command can only have been allegorical, the river of Babylon representing the approaching exile, by which "the pride of Judah and Jerusalem" is going to be "marred" and the old union between Jehovah and His people brought to an end.

wasted Jehovah's flock (1-4), concluding with a promise of the happier Messianic rule (5-8) in the vein of chs. 30–33 (see pp. 125–129). The string of royal oracles extends beyond the year 604, and looks as though it once formed a little book by itself.

The detached roll at first containing chs. 21 11–23 8 may, however, have included the rest of ch. 23 "concerning the prophets," since *kings and prophets* were the two chief powers in the Judæan commonwealth and were co-operating for its ruin. In the sustained and powerful philippic of 23 9-40, which is amongst the most finished of Jeremiah's extant speeches, the standing quarrel between himself and the popular prophets comes to a head; it sums up the utterances of many years. Vv. 13. 14 recall the earliest period of Jeremiah's ministry, when he was fond of comparing Judah with Israel (see 3 16-18); ver. 10 reminds us of "the drought" early in Jehoiakim's reign (14 1. 13-16); vv. 19. 20 imply that the troubles beginning with Josiah's death are in full course. The encounter between Hananiah and Jeremiah in 593 (ch. 28) may have been the occasion for this full deliverance against the false prophets; and there is nothing in 21 11–23 8 that demands a much later date.

Chap. 24, the vision of *the two baskets of figs*,

dates itself quite distinctly in the earlier part of Zedekiah's reign (597–587), when the worthlessness of the Judæan leaders left behind after Jehoiachin's captivity had become apparent. This chapter should be associated with 29.

We have thus eliminated chapters 13, 21–23, and 24, with other minor fragments, from the enlarged book of Jeremiah written out for him by Baruch at the end of the year 604. Allowing for occasional glosses and interpolations and for possible disarrangements due to accident or to the mistakes of editors and copyists, there is nothing in the residue of Jer. 1–25 which may not have stood, as we find it, in the volume referred to at the close of ch. 36. The chapters and sections of later date that we have detected within these limits were placed where they are, presumably, by a subsequent editor on the ground of some connexion of their subject-matter, real or supposed, with the said book: chs. 12 7-17, 13, 21–23, and 24 are all concerned with Jehovah's judgements on His apostate people, and are therefore congruous in their purport with the Book of Doom.

3. Chapters 12 7-17, 13, and 24 should be assigned to *the later memoirs of Jeremiah*, dating subsequently to the year 604. The same designation would apply to ch. 27—the prediction of Nebu-

chadrezzar's sovereignty, given under the figure of "bands and bars" worn on the prophet's neck[1]; and to ch. 28, relating the prophet's struggle with Hananiah, which took place "in the same year,"[2] the fourth of Zedekiah, viz. 593 B.C. To this category also belongs the singular story of the temptation of the Rechabites by Jeremiah in chap. 35 (dated about 600), which is told in the first person. Chap. 29—the account of Jeremiah's correspondence with the exiles of the first Judæan captivity—should probably be included here; for it stands in close connexion with

[1] "Jehoiakim" in the Received Text of ver. 1 is a patent error for "Zedekiah" (see the margin of the R.V.).

[2] "The same year, at the beginning of the reign of Zedekiah king of Judah, in the fourth year, in the fifth month": so chap. 28 is dated in ver. 1. The LXX omits the first two of these marks of time, reading "And it came to pass in the fourth year of Zedekiah, in the fifth month"; the LXX also ignores the date of 27 1. The critics in both instances adopt the shorter (LXX) reading. To speak of "the fourth year" as "in the beginning" of a reign which only lasted 10 years, is certainly anomalous. It will be noticed that ch. 28 begins as from Jeremiah's mouth ("Hananiah . . . spoke unto me"), but in the sequel puts Jeremiah into the third person. This change seems to be due to rhetorical feeling and to the design, either of the original narrator or of his editor, to set "Jeremiah the prophet" over against "Hananiah the prophet"—*prophet confronting prophet*. The LXX, according to its wont, abbreviates by writing simply "Hananiah" and "Jeremiah."

chs. 13, 24, and (in point of matter) with 28. Although Jeremiah does not speak in chap. 29 *propriâ personâ*, the absence of the first personal pronoun is accounted for by the fact that he is citing *letters* and not direct speech.

We have now six chapters—viz. 35, 13, 24, 29, 27, 28 (in the order of time)—containing so many distinct stories from Jeremiah's life during the years 603 to 593 and forming a consecutive and fairly connected body of memoirs, which may very well have been added by the prophet himself in the same fashion as previously to the Book of 604, antecedently to the last siege of Jerusalem and before this writing had taken on any further shape. This we may call the *third* edition of Jeremiah's Book of the Dooms of Israel, Judah, and the Nations. We must also recognise the possibility that, either at the second or third stage in the growth of this volume, oracles against the Foreign Nations, such as we find in the collection of chs. 46–51, were introduced. We have now accounted for the whole of chs. 1–29, with the exception of 26 and with the addition of 35.

4. In ch. 30 1-3 we come upon traces of a second "book" which Jeremiah was instructed to write, of a wholly different complexion from that described in ch. 36: "Write thee all the words

that I have spoken unto thee in a book ; for, lo, days are coming—it is the oracle of Jehovah !—when I will turn the captivity of My people Israel and Judah, saith Jehovah, and I will bring them again to the land that I gave to their fathers, and they shall possess it."[1] This command introduces a section of the Book of Jeremiah covering four chapters (30–33)—two of pure prophecy and two of narrative—that is complete in itself and stands out in bright relief against the general background of his ministry. Duhm happily designates it "The Book of the Future of Israel and Judah." Judging from the introductory words, we suppose this little book to have been written, perhaps at Mizpah (see ch. 40), when the Exile was complete and Zion lay desolate (see also, to this effect, 30 17. 18 31 6. 12. 27 28. 38). The delightful vision of the restored Israel and rebuilt Jerusalem appears, from 31 26, to have come to the prophet partly

[1] The authenticity of vv. 1-3 is more or less doubted by critics, for reasons that do not seem stringent. There is no real contradiction or discrepancy between 30 1 and 36 2 : one might take directions to "write a book" in 586 without any necessary reference to the earlier book written in 604 B.C. Vv. 10. 11 are more questionable : they are missing in the LXX, and do not fit this context; the passage is probably an ancient gloss taken from 46 27. 28, where the words are more apposite; but see p. 137.

in a dream—"Upon this I awaked, and beheld; and my sleep was sweet unto me." The above sentence marks the *end* of the dream: one suspects that some words have dropped out, either at ver. 22 or further back, describing the prophet's falling asleep and the beginning of his dream.

Chs. 32 and 33[1] are attached by way of illustration and comment to the great oracle of the foregoing chapters, and stand to them in much the same relation as the secondary (narrative) to the primary (predictive) elements of the Book of Doom. Both narratives relate to the time of the siege under Zedekiah, and they show that the hopeful thoughts which gave birth to the new book were stirring in Jeremiah's mind and sustained his courage throughout the last days of Jerusalem. The purchase of his cousin Chanam'el's field, enjoined on him by God, was itself a pledge of the better days coming; it was the occasion for a fuller disclosure of Jehovah's design to restore His kingdom and city. Ch. 33 adds a second and direct assurance to this effect,

[1] Following the criterion previously set up, viz. the reference to Jeremiah *in the first or third person*, we should assign ch. 32 to Jeremiah's reminiscences and ch. 33 to Baruch's. Perhaps chap. 33 would more correctly be placed under the next heading. If this narrative be due to Baruch, it has been very fittingly attached to ch. 32.

given while "Jeremiah was yet shut up in the court of the guard" (ver. 1 ; comp. 37 21). Along with the city, it appears that the Davidic throne and the Levitical priesthood are expected to be re-established (vv. 14-26).

The second part of ch. 33, however, containing these latter promises, is wanting in the Greek Version, and its contents expose it to the suspicion of post-Jeremianic origin :

> Vv. 17-22 give promises for the house of David and the house of Levi which do not harmonize with Jeremiah's tone ; in particular, the promises to the Levites imply a value put upon the external cultus and services, a specifically priestly ideal, which in this most spiritual of all the prophets is unthinkable (Cornill).[1]

Other expressions in the Book of Consolation (30–33) are read by the critics as interpolations from later hands—especially those that savour of

[1] Dr Cornill, with other critics, passes a like judgement on the Sabbath-prophecy of 17 19-27. His rejection of Jeremiah's authorship as "unthinkable," in both instances bears the note of exaggeration (see pp. 197–198, 233). Jeremiah could not imagine his Israel of the future *in abstracto*, without positive institutions and forms of worship. When he came to represent the life of the new-covenant people in concrete form, it would be very difficult for him to dispense with the monarchy and priesthood ; see, however, 31 34.

the Deutero-Isaiah—viz. 30 10b and 22 (these also wanting in the LXX), 31 10-14. 37 (wanting in LXX); and even the entire prayer of Jeremiah and Jehovah's answer in 32 16-44, which are said to be written in a prosaic and spun-out style foreign to Jeremiah and belonging to the later Jewish literature of edification. It is conceivable that the prayer and answer have been expanded by the scribes. Messianic texts and passages relating to the latter days were liable, beyond others, to attract glosses and accretions in transmission.[1]

Very characteristic for Jeremiah is the anticipation of *the return of Ephraim.* This is described (31 2-20) in language of exquisite pathos, which recalls the heart-piercing tones of Hosea (see Vol. I, Ch. VIII). Amongst the marks of genuineness attaching to the crowning Jeremianic prophecy of the New Covenant (31 31-34) is the fact that it is introduced as "a covenant *with the house of Israel* and with the house of Judah."

5. Nineteen chapters of the canonical "Jeremiah" still remain, outside of those we have included in the two "books," with their supple-

[1] Duhm has attacked the genuineness of 31 31-34; but on this very grave point he is effectually controverted by Cornill (see pp. 211, 234–239 below).

ments, that are certified as having been drawn up by the prophet himself. Ch. 26 we have put on one side, for it purports to be written *about* Jeremiah, not "from his mouth": it is a graphic and detailed account of Jeremiah's trial for sedition, which took place on his reappearance as the prophet of doom to Jerusalem in the year 608. This narrative makes reference to the speech reported by Jeremiah himself in ch. 7: comp. 26 6. 12 with 7 12-15; also 26 3. 13 with 7 3; and 26 12 —"this house and this city"—with 7 4 and 9-14, and with 7 29-33.[1] In similar fashion, ch. 36 tells the tale of the publication of Jeremiah's first book of prophecy in the year 604. This report, like the former, unmistakably comes from an eye-witness, and the evidence points to no one but *Baruch* as the narrator. Chs. 26 and 36[2] are therefore passages from Jeremiah's life, furnished by his companion and amanuensis, of the

[1] E. Bruston, in his lucid and interesting dissertation entitled *Le Prophète Jérémie et son temps*, dates ch. 7 in *Josiah's* reign and before the reformation; he thinks that the comparison of the Jerusalem temple with the tabernacle at Shiloh was used by Jeremiah more than once.

[2] Ch. 36, where it stands, is altogether detached from its true context. Its position, like that of 21 1-10, and of 24 and 35, is strong evidence to the disarrangement which the Book of Jeremiah has suffered since it left the hands of its authors.

greatest value for elucidating his prophecies and written, one would suppose, expressly for this purpose. They are memoirs of Jeremiah's private secretary, which were added, with or without the prophet's instructions, to the Book of Doom that Baruch had written out for him in two successive stages. Had the prophet enjoyed Baruch's companionship earlier, we might have had interesting memoranda of the same kind from Josiah's time.

Beside the two chapters above named, relating to the critical epochs of Jeremiah's mission in the reign of Jehoiakim, we find a string of narratives of the same stamp—being in prose style, and quoting Jeremiah in the third person and in a curt and somewhat bald manner, but full of incident and lively description—which set forth the hero's later fortunes. These stories of the prophet give a pretty full account of his position and relations to the public authorities—(*a*) during the last siege and capture of Jerusalem, and (*b*) amongst the Judæans left behind in the country with whom he finally migrated to Egypt, where we lose sight of him. The narrative pieces belonging to the history of Jeremiah in the siege and after, together with chs. 26 and 36, form what we may call *the memoirs of Baruch*, which supply a distinct and invaluable

contribution to the completed Book of Jeremiah :[1] they include chs. 21 1-10 (see p. 121 above), 34 1-7 and 8-22, 37 1-10. 11-21 38 1-13. 14-28 39 11-14,[2] 15-18 (in order of time coming after 38 1-13), 51 59-64 (see pp. 134-5)—the above form (*a*) *the anecdotes of the siege and capture*, which may have stood in the first instance by themselves ;[3] (*b*) chs. 40–44,

[1] It is likely enough that Baruch, in writing and rewriting his master's oracles, added prosaic touches of his own—historical allusions in the shape of headings and annotations, and connecting links between the discourses. Some passages of this sort, which critics eliminate as un-Jeremianic, may be due to the secretary's pen and may be strictly original.

[2] Ch. 39 1-10 (headed by the last clause of ch. 38 : see R.V.), apart from ver. 3 is nearly identical with 2 Kings 25 1-12; and this paragraph appears a second time in the Book of Jeremiah, at the beginning of ch. 52. In ch. 52 this Book is admittedly the borrower; as between Jer. 39 1-10 and 2 Kings 25 1-12, the question of originality is disputable. Many critics ascribe to Baruch only 38 28*b* 39 3. 14 : "But when Jerusalem was taken, then came all the princes . . . of the king of Babylon, and they had Jeremiah fetched out of the court of the guard," etc. The LXX wants 39 4-13 altogether.

[3] The superscription of the Book of Jeremiah (1 1) extends it "unto the carrying away of Jerusalem captive in the fifth month" : *i.e.* it regards the volume as closing at ch. 39 (without, however, excluding 46–49), and finds no place for chs. 40–44. It looks as though the heading had been prefixed in the year 586, and belonged to an edition (from the hand of Baruch?) of that epoch. If so, we must recognise *four* editions of the Book of Jeremiah up to date : (1) The original Roll burnt by Jehoiakim; (2) the reproduction of this, with "many like words," containing Jeremiah's pro-

a long and full piece of biography,[1] written probably while the prophet was still living, which recounts *Jeremiah's experiences and doings amongst the residue of his people* left behind *in Judæa, and in Egypt*, whither they migrated dragging the reluctant prophet with them. That this most valuable supplement comes from Baruch is made evident by ch. 45, which is in effect *a signature*, since it contains the oracle of warning and promise of safety given by Jeremiah to his friend[2] in the year 605, when Baruch had assisted him in the production of his earliest book.

We owe therefore to Baruch the son of Neriah something like twelve chapters, or nearly a

phetic reminiscences up to the year 604; (3) a further issue of the Book of Doom, with reminiscences coming down to 593—this would embrace the whole of chs. 1–29, excluding 26 and including 35; (4) a greatly enlarged volume, extending to ch. 39 (including also chs. 46–49?), which embraced Jeremiah's Book of Consolation (30–33) added to the Book of Doom, and Baruch's biographical memoirs up to the year 587.

[1] This memoir gives a favourable impression of Baruch's historical power.

[2] See the foot-note on p. 113. As Jeremiah grew older, it is likely that he left the care of his writings more and more to his companion. The fourth (see last note but one) and fifth editions owe their shape, presumably, to Baruch rather than Jeremiah. The *fifth* we take to be the last issued in the prophet's lifetime.

fourth of the entire work. In a certain sense, we owe to him *the whole*; for without the secretary's careful and willing pen the great prophet's words might have found no record. In all fairness, this Scripture ought to be called "The Book of Jeremiah and Baruch." If we could recover the work as it left Baruch's hands, closing with ch. 45, we should probably find it orderly and well-digested. The incoherences which make the study of Jeremiah so difficult, should be imputed to later handling.

6. Chs. 46–51, as they stand, form an appendix to the work of Jeremiah-Baruch. They contain Jeremiah's *oracles on the foreign nations*, put together under the title "The word of Jehovah which came to Jeremiah the prophet concerning the nations." This collection raises many difficulties for criticism.

The doom upon Babylon, which fills chs. 50 and 51, and is nearly as long as the rest of the Foreign Oracles united, concludes this section. To it is attached an anecdote (51 59–64) telling how, at the time "when Zedekiah went up to Babylon in the fourth year of his reign" (593: a critical epoch for Jeremiah), the prophet "wrote in a book all the evil that should come upon Babylon, *even all these words which are written concerning Babylon*" (a reference to

chs. 50 2–51 58),[1] and gave the book to Seraiah, Baruch's brother, who was on Zedekiah's staff, directing him to read the roll aloud and then fling the book, with a stone tied to it, "into the midst of Euphrates, saying, Thus shall Babylon sink, and shall rise no more!" There is no reason to doubt the historicity of this very singular story, which is connected through Seraiah with Baruch, and may well have belonged to the memoranda of the latter. The symbolic action it relates is in keeping with Jeremiah's methods; in point of time, it nearly synchronized with the symbol of *the yokes* (27), by which he represented the subjection of Judah and her neighbours to Babylon; the token of *the sunk book* was a suitable pendant to the other emblem, as it indicated to the Judæan king and nobles that their present submission to the Chaldæans, enforced upon them by Jehovah's will, would be followed by ultimate deliverance and should therefore be patiently borne.

That some short oracle on Babylon's doom was written in 593 B.C. by Jeremiah and thus disposed of, we may readily believe. But to say that chs. 50 and 51 reproduce that "book,"

[1] This clause belongs to the writer of the foregoing prophecy, or to the editor who connected it with the story of Jeremiah's drowned book.

is a different matter. The Jeremianic authorship of this prophecy, in anything like its present form, is surrendered by nearly all Old Testament scholars. The writing is charged with Jeremiah's phrases and, in particular sentences, recalls his ideas and manner; but it is badly composed, confused and straggling throughout and lacking in poetic unity and movement. It betrays reminiscences of Ezekiel and the Second Isaiah, along with Jeremiah, and its author has drawn largely upon Isa. 13 2–14 23—a composition which we have ascribed to a late exilic epoch (see Vol. II, pp. 92-4). The attitude of the writer toward Nebuchadrezzar and the Chaldæans is not that of Jeremiah[1]: he nowhere recognises the conqueror as Jehovah's "servant" and filling a place in His sovereign purposes (25 9); there is no hint of caution to the exiles already in Babylonia, nothing said to help them to bear their banishment peacefully and hopefully (contrast chap. 29); the utterance breathes the unqualified hatred and vengeance against the tyrant city that animated the exiles in the later years of the Babylonian dominion (comp. Ps. 137). The writer sees Babylon's overthrow now close at hand, as Nahum saw that of Nineveh; the

[1] He somewhat resembles Jeremiah's contemporary Habakkuk in his animus toward the Chaldæans; see Ch. XXII.

invading peoples are pouring in upon her like a sea, and Jehovah's people are ready to go forth from her midst (51 42-45). We accept, as most plausible, the view of chs. 50–51 advanced by recent critics to the effect that the prophecy of judgement upon Babylon was uttered by a late exilic, or early post-exilic, writer, using possibly for a nucleus some brief word of Jeremiah against Babylon, who attempted in good faith to reproduce the book flung into the Euphrates by Seraiah. If so, ch. 50 2–51 58 testifies to the state of Jewish thought and feeling on the eve of the restoration, rather than of the destruction, of Jerusalem.

The remainder of the Foreign Oracles, though by no means free from obscurities, may be relied on as Jeremiah's authentic work. Against *Egypt* two distinct prophecies are directed: 46 2-12, purporting to have been delivered shortly before the battle of Carchemish (605 B.C.); and 46 13-26, which is undated, but resembles 43 10-12 and may therefore be referred to the time of Jeremiah's sojourn in Egypt (after 586 B.C.)[1] Chap. 47, "concerning *the Philistines*, before that Pharaoh smote Gaza," belongs to the era of Egyptian sway in Palestine, 608–605 B.C. The five dooms

[1] Hebraists detect a play on the name (Pharaoh) *Hophra* in ver. 17. Vv. 27, 28 read like a Deutero-Isaianic annotation.

that follow—upon *Moab* (48), *Ammon* (49 1-6), *Edom* (49 7-22), *Damascus* (49 23-27), *Kedar and the kingdoms of Hazor* (49 28-33), are undated; but these may have borne the same date with that given to the eighth doom, upon *Elam* (49 34-39), viz. "the beginning of the reign of Zedekiah," the time when Jeremiah sent round the "yokes" to the kingdoms neighbouring Judah (27); or they were first written, perhaps in some shorter form, in 604 at the crisis signalised by chap. 25.

Apart from the case of Egypt, whose importance demanded fuller treatment, the other dooms are brief and summary—except the two concerning *Moab* and *Edom*. These peoples were the objects of a special animus on the part of the Judæans; but the peculiar feature of the Moabite and Edomite dooms is that in each case the writer borrows from older oracles[1]—ch. 48 taking up and incorporating, with large additions and adaptations, the prophecy of Isa. 15, 16, against Moab, and 49 7-22 utilising the little Book of Obadiah (vv. 14-16 = Obad. 1-4). This

[1] We are begging the question of *priority* here. In comparing Isa. 15, 16 and Jer. 48, most critics see the older form of the common matter in Isaiah; but the reverse holds in the case of Obad. 1-4 and Jer. 49 7-22—the general vote of critics assigns a late date to the Book of Obadiah. We have touched on these two questions in Vol. I, chs. V, VI.

dependence may seem to throw doubt on Jeremiah's authorship; but the same phenomenon has appeared in the instance of Isaiah (Vol. I, pp. 116–120, and Vol. II, pp. 77, 79, 81); Jeremiah is doing here in a good way what he taxes other prophets (in 23 30) with doing in a bad way; prophecy was a continuous legacy, and its oracles were liable to be worked-over and redelivered at successive epochs (see Vol. I, pp. 27, 28). When we find Jeremiah thus appropriating and recasting the utterances of his predecessors, we need not be surprised that unknown successors have in some cases taken similar liberties with his words, and that the Book of the Nebi'im bears traces throughout of prophetical glosses and postscripts arising from the needs of later times.

The translators of the Septuagint have interposed the Foreign Oracles in the middle of Jeremiah (after ver. 13 of ch. 25), conforming to the order of Isaiah (see chs. 13–23) and Ezekiel (35–39), and supposing probably that chs. 46–51 formed the "words written in this book, which Jeremiah prophesied against all the nations." The intruded section destroys the continuity of vv. 13-15; this cannot have been its original situation. At the same time, it is not unlikely that "the word of Jehovah concerning the nations" announced in ch. 46 1 was at first

attached to ch. 25 and formed part of the Book of Doom—in the shape perhaps of a series of brief oracles—and that it was detached from this connexion and made into an appendix to the completed Book of Jeremiah, when the long prophecy against Babylon (50, 51) was added thereto, at the time when the fall of Babylon had become the absorbing interest of Jewish minds.[1] If so, the Greek editors have made an awkward attempt to restore the Oracles in question to the place where they once stood in Jeremiah's writings.

The LXX, while it displaces the Foreign Oracles, has redistributed them in the following order: Elam, Egypt, Babylon, Philistia, Edom, Ammon, Kedar, Damascus, Moab—an arrangement that seems quite arbitrary, whereas the Hebrew order, in chs. 46–51, follows the succession of the drinkers of Jehovah's cup of wrath in ch. 25, with the exception that Edom there precedes Moab and Ammon while in ch. 49 it

[1] This consideration suggests the date for the conclusive edition of the Book of Jeremiah—the *sixth* we have ventured to distinguish—viz. the closing of the Judæan exile in Babylon, *c.* 540 B.C. Ch. 52 may have been appended at the same time, since the Book of Kings was, in all probability, compiled during the Exile. This supposition does not exclude the possibility of interpolations and editorial touches coming from later hands.

follows them.[1] It is curious that the LXX omits *the promises of restoration*—to Egypt (46 26), Moab (48 47; also vv. 45. 46 are missing), Ammon (49 6)—except in the case of Elam (49 39).

7. Chap. 52 is an *historical postscript* to the Book of Jeremiah, as completed by the inclusion of the Dooms on Foreign Nations, and stands to this Book in the relation which chs. 36–39 hold to the Book of the First Isaiah.

This chapter, like Isaiah 36–39, is an excerpt from the 2nd Book of Kings (24 18–25 21),[2] which surely possessed the status of a standard work when it came to be thus used. Vv. 4–16 have been anticipated in ch. 39 1–10 (see p. 132). The reference of the last paragraph (vv. 31–34) to the elevation of Jehoiachin by king Evil-Merodach on the accession of the latter to the throne of Babylon, which took place in 561 B.C., brings

[1] *Damascus* in 49 23-27 fills the place of *Tyre and Zidon*, etc., in 25 22—the latter, however, have a share in the Doom of *the Philistines* (47 4). The Arabian tribes, known as *Kedar and the kingdoms of Hazor* in 49 28 33, are spoken of by other names in 25 23-25. The *Medes* of 25 25 are unnoticed in the Dooms of chs. 46–49.

[2] The two narratives are not quite identical: 2 Kings 25 22-26 is omitted here, for chs. 39 and 40 have told us the story of Gedaliah; and Jer. 52 28 29, with the valuable numerical data it contains, is wanting in 2 Kings.

us down, for the completion of the Book, to an epoch beyond the lifetime of Jeremiah, and probably of Baruch also.

We will now analyse the Book of Jeremiah, on the basis of its history as sketched above.

The Book of Jeremiah and Baruch

I. The Great Book of Doom, dictated by Jeremiah in 604 B.C. This contained a digest of Jeremiah's prophecies of judgement, of the years 628–605, to which were added in rewriting "many like words," including the autobiographical passages and reminiscences interspersed through chs. 1–29. It is impossible to discriminate certainly between the matter contained in the earlier and later recensions of this work.

1. *The Introduction*, concerning the Prophet's Call and Life-work, chap. 1.

(*a*) Jeremiah's First Struggle with his Vocation.

2. *The Judgement upon Judah's Treachery toward Jehovah*, chs. 2–6. A connected discourse reproducing Jeremiah's teaching in the pre-reformation years, 628–621. Only 3 6-18 breaks the continuity, having slipped out of its place either before or after the rest of chs. 2 and 3. In this grand philippic two sections are distinguished :

A. The Sacred Nation's Perfidy, chap. 2, 3

(a) Israel represented for Jehovah in the Love of her Youth, chap. 2.[1]

(b) The Question of her Divorce by Jehovah, 3 1a and 3 4–5.

(c) Comparison of Israel's Harlotry with that of her Sister Israel, 3 6–11.[2]

B. The Impending Punishment, chap. 4–6

(a) The Enemy's Approach signalled, 4 5–6.

(b) The Call to Lamps for Zion, 4 16.

(c) Preparations made to see whether Judgement may be arrested. An appalling Result, chap. 5.

(d) The Invasion announced. The Nation vanquished, and its Fortress destroyed, chap. 6.

[We have suggested that 3 14–18, the Promise of the Return, Covenant Word originally here between 3, 2 and 3—perhaps a more complete form in which it matched the previous preaching and the following.]

C. The Judgement upon the Hypocrisy of Judah, chap. 7–10 (including 8 4–9 26).[3] The Covenant

[1] Because finds this pleasant but transient interval when the love of the bride for the bridegroom Israel under the figure of a bride, the second—and subsequent—the reproach utterly and without the figure. The two sections are in different style and mark the latter resembling Deuteronomy. We are on this ground confirmed by Duhm as non-Jeremianic.

[2] In these "Israel" and "Judah" are portrayed as harlot sisters in the worst sense and after "Israel" stands for the people generally and perhaps in many cases.

[3] In the Hebrew sentences are usually as "you" in the rest of the chapter as "thou."

[4] On the related prophecies see the footnote p. 150

reverts to the year 608, the crisis caused by Josiah's death! followed by the captivity of Shallum (Jehoahaz) and the accession of Jehoiakim.

(*a*) The People's False Trust in the Temple, which is to suffer the Fate of the House at Shiloh, 7 1-28 (comp. ch. 26).

(*b*) The swiftly coming End of Jerusalem, whose Calamities will match her Sins, 7 29–8 17.

(*c*) Lamentations over her hapless but richly deserved Fate, 8 18–9 22 and 10 18-25.

4. *Scenes and Reminiscences of Jeremiah's Earlier Ministry*, illustrating chs. 2–10. This heading covers the "many like words" of 36 32, including chs. 1, 11, 12 (in part), with 14–20. (On chap. 13 see pp. 120–121.)

(*a*) The Broken Covenant of Judah, and the Attempt on Jeremiah's Life at Anathoth; or, the Double Conspiracy (11 9 and 19), 11 1–12 6.[1]

(*b*) The Sermon on the Drought, 14 1–15 9.

(*β*) Jeremiah's Second Struggle with his Vocation, 15 10-21.

(*c*) The Prophet forbidden to marry, ch. 16. The actual prohibition doubtless came earlier; this is a discourse about it.

(*d*) Short Oracle of Doom, followed by Altercation with the People and Appeal to Jehovah: 17 1-4, 5-13, and 14-18.[2]

[1] Ch. 11 1-17, or some equivalent discourse, seems to be required between chs. 2–6 and 7–10, in view of the description of 36 2; but as this section now stands, it serves to introduce the Anathoth plot. See postscript to 2 *B* above.

[2] The connexion of thought and of occasion in ch. 17 is very precarious; see p. 120.

(γ) Jeremiah's Third Struggle with his Vocation, vv. 14-18.

[(*e*) Homily on Sabbath-keeping, ch. 17 19-27. This piece, like 11 1-8 (or -18), may have first belonged to the Covenant-preaching of Josiah's time. Its authenticity is much disputed; see p. 120.]

(*f*) Discourses on the Potter's Wheel and the Broken Jar, chs. 18, 19.

(*g*) Jeremiah beaten and put in the Stocks, ch. 20.

(δ) Final Struggle of the Prophet with his Vocation, vv. 7-18.

5. *The Judgement upon the Nations* (after Carchemish, 605), chap. 25.

II. Book of Oracles against the Kings and Prophets, chaps. 21–23. Apart from 21 1-10, which has been torn from its proper context (see p. 121), nothing here requires a later occasion than 593 B.C. These chapters may have been added as a supplement to the Book of Doom, some time after the above date, along with Section III.

1. *Two* detached *Addresses to the House of David*—(*a*) ch. 21 11-14, brief and general, bearing on King and City; (*b*) 22 1-9, a Homily directed to some particular Ruler, probably Josiah.

2. *Elegy on Josiah and Shallum-Jehoahaz* (608 B.C.), 22 10-12.

3. *Denunciation of Jehoiakim*, 22 13-19.

4. *Doom of Jehoiachin*, 22 20-30.

5. *Judgement on the Evil Shepherds, and Promise of a Better Rule*, 23 1-8.[1]

6. *Concerning the Prophets of the Day*, 23 9-40. One of Jeremiah's most finished and powerful diatribes; as to its date, see p. 122.

III. Later Reminiscences of Jeremiah: chs. 12 7-17, 35, and 13, 24, 27–29. A supplement to the Book of Doom, added by the prophet some time before the last siege of Jerusalem.

1. *Denunciation of Judah's Evil Neighbours*, chap. 12 7-17. Date, about 600 (?); see p. 119.

2. *Temptation of the Rechabites*, chap. 35. Date, about 600 B.C.

3. *The Symbols of the Marred Girdle, and the Full Wine-Jar*, chap. 13. Date, the earlier Judæan Captivity, 597 B.C.; see pp. 120, 121.

4. *Vision of the Two Fig-baskets*, ch. 24. Somewhat later than the above.

5. *Correspondence of Jeremiah with the Exiles*, chap. 29. A little later again.

6. *Symbol of the Yokes for the Necks of Judah and the Nations*, chap. 27. Date, 597 (?) or 593.

[1] Vv. 7. 8 are of uncertain origin. The LXX puts them at the end of the chapter; this indicates that the passage had a doubtful footing. The words have occurred once before, in 16 14. 15, where also they seem out of place; they look very much like a proverbial prophetic saying, such as scribes might be tempted to insert here or there.

7. *Encounter with Hananiah*, ch. 28. Date, 593.

[Here, perhaps, the Book of Oracles against the Kings and Prophets (II above) should come in.]

IV. The Little Book of Consolation, chs. 30–33. The prophecies of restoration presuppose the fulfilment of Zion's doom. Chs. 30 and 31 should therefore be dated shortly after the fall of Jerusalem in 587 (see pp. 125–127); chs. 32, 33 are recollections from the siege illustrating this book.

1. *Prediction of Zion's Resurrection*, ch. 30.[1]

2. *Ephraim, Jehovah's Firstborn, to share in the Redemption*, 31 1-30.

3. *The New Covenant between Jehovah and Reconciled Israel*, 31 31-40.

4. *Sign of the Restoration* in the Purchase of Chanam'el's Field, 32 1-15; on vv. 16-44 see p. 129.

5. *Promise to the like effect made by Jehovah during the Siege*, ch. 33 1-13; on vv. 14-26 see p. 128.

V. Baruch's Memoirs of Jeremiah: chs. 21 1-10, 26, 34, 36–45, 51 59-64.

1. *The Story of the Prophet's Encounter with the People* in 608 B.C., chap. 26 (=ch. 7).

2. *The Writing of the Book of Doom* in the years 605–4, chap. 36.

[1] On vv. 1-3, and 10. 11, see footnote, p. 126.

3. *The Book of Babylon's Fate sunk in Euphrates*, 51 59-64. Date, 593 B.C.

4. *Jeremiah's Warnings to Zedekiah:*

(*a*) In answer to the First Deputation, 21 1-10; at the beginning of the War, about 590 B.C.

(*b*) Later in the War, when two fortresses outside of Jerusalem still stood, 34 1-7.

(*c*) Answer to the Second Deputation, at the suspension of the Siege, 37 3-12.

(*d*) Interview with the King near the End of the Siege, 38 14-28.

5. *The Abortive Enfranchisement of the Slaves*, during the Siege, ch. 34 8-22.

6. *Jeremiah's Treatment during the Siege:*

(*a*) Arrested for going out to Anathoth, 37 11-21.

(*b*) Flung into an Empty Cistern for preaching Surrender and rescued by 'Ebed-melek, 38 1-13; the Promise of Safety to his Rescuer, 39 15-18.

7. *Release of Jeremiah on the Capture of the City*, by Nebuchadrezzar's order:

(*a*) First Account, in 39 11-14—preceded by the account of the Capture of the City (1-10), based on 2 Kings 25 1-12 (see p. 132).

(*b*) Second Account, in 40 1-6, leading up to the next section.[1]

8. *Jeremiah's Experience with the Judæans after the Captivity*, chs. 40 7–44 30.

(*a*) Assembling of the Remnant at Mizpah, 40 7 12.

(*b*) Gedaliah's neglected Warning, 40 13-16.

(*c*) Gedaliah's Murder by Ishmael, 41 1-10.

[1] These two accounts of Jeremiah's release do not seem quite consistent; they may be from different hands.

(d) Covenant of Jehoiada (2 Kings xi. 17).

(e) Jeremiah's Prophecy against the Kings to Egypt, chap. 42.

(f) The Flight to Egypt, chap. 43.

3. Jeremiah's Doom on the Jewesses in Egypt, chap. 44.

(a) The Oracle for Baruch, the Year 604 B.C.

VI. Jeremiah's Doom on the Foreign Nations: chs. 46–51 [50, 51].[1]

1. Against Egypt, ch. 46 (a) against the Army of Pharaoh-Necho, vv. 1–12, in 605 B.C.; (b) against Pharaoh-Hophra (?), vv. 13–26, about 586.

2. The Philistines, chap. 47; 604–5 B.C.

3. The Moabites, chap. 48 [= Isa. 15, 16].

4. The Ammonites, chap. 49 vv. 1–6.

5. The Edomites, chap. 49 vv. 7–22 [Obad. 1–9].

6. Damascus, etc., chap. 49 vv. 23–27.

7. Kedar, etc. [The Arabians], ch. 49 vv. 28–33.

8. The Elamites, ch. 49 vv. 34–39.

9. The Doom of Babylon, which was sent to Euphrates, ch. 51 vv. 59. Date, 593 B.C.

VII. The Historical Postscript, chap. 52. See pp. 141, 142.

[1] On these two chapters, see pp. 134–137.

[2] The 26 last verses are identical with 2 Kings xxv. The genealogy of vv. 3 and 7 is however much superior in historical grounds, and between the matter of these verses lacks historical confirmation.

It will be convenient to append a chronological table of the chapters of Jeremiah :

B.C.	Chapter.
628	1
628–621	2–6 ; (?) 16 ; 21 11–22 9
621 or later	(?) 11 1-8, 11 9–12 6 ; (?) 17 19-27
608	7–10, 26,[1] 22 10-12 ; 46 1 12
608–605	22 13-18, 47 ; (?) 14–15, 17 1-18, 18–20
605–604	25, 36, 45 ; (?) 48, 49 1-33
c. 600	35 ; (?) 12 7-17 ; 23 1-8
597	13, 22 20-30
597–593	24, 29, 27, 28 ; 49 34-39 ; (?) 23 9-39
593	51 59-64
588–587	21 1-10, 34, 37–39 ; 32–33
587 and later	30-31 ; 40–44 ; 46 13-26

A few words remain to be said about the Septuagint Version and its relation to the received Hebrew Text, from which it deviates more frequently and notably than in any other Book of the Old Testament. The Greek is shorter than the Hebrew by 2,700 words, or about one-eighth of the whole! At one time the view prevailed that the Egyptian-Greek translators, working probably in the second century B.C., had before them a distinct edition of the original preserved in Egypt from the

[1] In the case of *narrative* sections, such as ch. 26, the date refers not to the time when the story may have been written, but to the time when the events took place.

time of Jeremiah's death, and that the Massoretic form of the Book was derived from a later Palestinian recension, in which the Egyptian text had undergone enlargement and rearrangement. This theory is now abandoned, and the general superiority of the Massoretic reading is recognised, in Jeremiah as in the rest of the Old Testament. The greater number of variations must be put down to the errors and the licence of the translator; and apart from the larger omissions distinguishing the LXX, there is little reason for supposing that the Jews of Egypt had in possession any purer form of Jeremiah than those of Palestine or used a recension of the original differing in any material respect from that represented by the extant Hebrew MSS. The brevity of the Greek rendering appears to be due in great measure to *systematic abbreviation*: the translator of this book has used greater freedom than any of his collaborators,[1] habitually shortening the titles of persons, omitting proper names where possible, dropping synonymous expressions, and curtailing descriptions.

[1] The signal inequality of the LXX rendering of the O.T. in its different parts proves that the work was done by different hands working independently; it extended probably over a long period of time.

The following passage, relating the death of the prophet Uriah (26 20-23), in which the words omitted by the LXX are italicized, will show how largely the translation is an abridgement:

> And there was *also* a man that prophesied in the name of the LORD, Uriah the son of Shemaiah of Kirjath-jearim, and he prophesied *against this city and* against this land according to all the words of Jeremiah. And the king Jehoiakim, with *all his mighty men and* all the princes, heard his words, and { he / *the king* } sought to put him to death; and Uriah heard of it, *and was afraid, and fled* and went into Egypt. And the king *Jehoiakim* sent men into Egypt—*Elnathan the son of Achbor and certain men with him, into Egypt*; and they fetched { him / *Uriah* } forth { thence, / *out of Egypt,* } and brought him unto the king *Jehoiakim*, who slew him with the sword, and cast { him / *his dead body* } into the graves of the sons of the people.

In the above example, the Greek exhibits a calculated and not unskilful *cutting down* of the Hebrew, which bears unmistakable marks of originality. This is not the case in which a shorter, purer text has been glossed, but in which the full text has been of set purpose condensed. Similarly, the LXX retrenches vv. 1. 2 of ch. 7

omitting the graphic and living touches of the passage and reducing the sentence to its barest terms: "Hear the word of the LORD, all Judah!" Where duplicates occur in different parts of the (Hebrew) Book — a phenomenon frequent in Jeremiah (comp. 6 12-15 and 8 10-12, 6 22-24 and 50 41-43, 10 12-16 and 51 15-19, 16 14, 15 and 23 7, 8, 23 5, 6 and 33 14-16, 30 10, 11 and 46 27, 28, 39 1-10 and 52 4-16, 49 19-21 and 50 44-46)—the LXX (except in the peculiar instances of chs. 50, 51 [1]) avoids the repetition, and is, on the whole, sustained by internal evidence in doing so. Amongst the other substantial omissions (as distinguished from abbreviations) distinguishing the Greek Version, those of 29 16-20, 48 45-47, 33 14-26 (less certainly), and 49 6 commend themselves on intrinsic grounds— these we take to be instances in which the shorter Greek text is free from accretions that the Hebrew has subsequently gathered; on the contrary, the absence of 11 7, 8, 17 1-4, 31 37, 52 2, 3, 15, 28-30, from the Greek gives proof of real defects in the text employed by the translator, or of mistaken judgement upon his part.

The nature and value of the Hebrew text which underlay the LXX constitute a problem still awaiting complete investigation. Mean-

[1] On this post-Jeremianic composition, which is largely a catena from older prophecy, see pp. 134–137.

while, the verdict of A. B. Davidson[1] is that in which Old Testament scholars generally would concur, so far as Jeremiah is concerned :

> Both texts reflect the same archetype ; but this archetype underwent a gradual process of expansion, and the process is reflected at an earlier stage in the MS. or MSS. at the basis of the LXX, and at a more advanced stage in those at the basis of the Massoretic Text. . . . Speaking generally, the Massoretic Text is *qualitatively* greatly superior to the Greek ; but on the other hand, *quantitatively*, the Greek is nearer the original text. This judgement is general, admitting many exceptions—that is, cases where the quality of the Greek text is better, and its readings more original than the Hebrew ; and also cases where, in regard to quantity, the Hebrew is to be preferred, the omissions in the LXX being due to faults in the translator's MS., to his own oversight, or to his tendency to scamp and abridge.

If one dared to dissent even a little from so great a master, one would be disposed to lay more stress on the last probability than Davidson seems to have done.

[1] See his excellent article on "Jeremiah" in Hastings' *Dictionary of the Bible*, vol. ii, p. 574.

CHAPTER XXV

THE HISTORY OF JEREMIAH

The Martyr Prophet—Personal detached from Natural Religion—Home of Jeremiah—Chronology of the Title — Jeremiah and Deuteronomy — Jeremiah, Zephaniah, Josiah—Delay of threatened Calamity —Accession of Jehoiakim—Conflict between Prophet and King—Denunciation of Jehoiakim—First Deportation to Babylon — Relations of Jeremiah and King Zedekiah—Prophecy of the Yokes—The Popular Prophets—Correspondence with the Exiles —Second Siege of Jerusalem—Jeremiah charged with Treason—Jeremiah's Last Days.

THE Book of Jeremiah is largely an autobiography. The author becomes unconsciously the hero of his work. At this crisis the religion of Israel took refuge within the soul of this devoted and much-enduring man; there it concentred its forces for a new advance. Jeremiah is the martyr-prophet, in whom above all others "the Spirit of the Christ testified beforehand" of His sufferings. So with this

prophet the Old Testament faith enters upon its more inward and subjective stage of development. The transition from Amos and Hosea to Jeremiah resembles in religion that which is marked amongst the philosophers in passing from Plato and Aristotle to the Stoics. As national life decayed and the state-religions of classical Greece broke down, philosophy threw off its political habit and became introspective and ethical; so with the ruin of the Israelite nationality, as city and monarchy and temple fell under the doom pronounced by prophecy, the life of the individual soul struck deeper root. Losing its supports in the old covenant institutions and severing itself from the corrupt society around it, the faith of men like Jeremiah cast itself nakedly upon the word of Jehovah and found its stay and nourishment in inward communion with God.

Personal religion thus detaches itself from social and institutional religion, and comes to full consciousness. In this lies the chief positive significance of the story of Jeremiah. As it has so often proved, the death of the old world was giving birth to the new ; where everything visible spoke of defeat and the anguish of dissolution, a richer and finer life was germinating in the soil covered with the wreck of past

greatness. That so much has been preserved of Jeremiah's work and that his character shines out so eminently, shows that the after-times did not fail to realize the nobility of the man and the importance of his message. Jeremiah fills a large and unique place in the succession of the prophets; in pure spiritual vision and attainment, he must be pronounced the greatest of them all.

Like Isaiah, Jeremiah laboured under three kings (1 1); his public ministry covered more than forty years, extending from 628 to 585 B.C. or later. Both prophesied under rulers of the most opposite character: in the former case, an apostate father was followed by a pious son, Isaiah in his earlier years struggling with Ahaz to find a disciple and ally in his successor; Jeremiah's experience was the reverse of this—the reformation effected by Josiah during the first half of his course being followed by a fatal relapse under that king's ignoble sons. Isaiah's career culminated in the glorious deliverance of Jerusalem from Sennacherib: Jeremiah's old age witnessed the destruction of Jerusalem by Nebuchadrezzar, and the eclipse of the national life. He died an obscure exile, at the hands, as tradition relates, of his fellow-countrymen; but he attained through his long tribulation a grand

spiritual victory, and "kept the faith" for future generations. This man of sorrows could well have said to the true Israel, like Jesus in dying, "Be of good cheer; I have overcome the world!"

Jeremiah was the son of a priestly house belonging to Anathoth, a little town situated in the territory of Benjamin, two and a half miles north-east of Jerusalem. His native place stood high on the mountain-ridge, commanding a wide view northwards over "the hills of Ephraim" (4 15, 31 6. 15-20) and eastwards over "the pride of Jordan" (12 5 49 19 50 44), across the river-valley which vividly contrasted by its luxuriant growth with "the bare heights" on either side of it (3 2. 21 4 11 7 29). His horizon is full of "the mountains," which in his visions of judgement he sees "trembling" beneath Jehovah's displeasure and "the hills moving to and fro" (4 24; comp. 9 10 13 16). "The land of Benjamin" is conspicuous in his enumeration of localities (32 44 33 13; comp. 6 1); "Rachel," the tribe-mother of Ephraim and Benjamin, figures in one of his most pathetic pictures (31 15). The landscape of Anathoth supplied to Jeremiah's imagination its broad framework; the imagery which filled it was rich and various. Nature and human life, in country and city, are reflected

in the mirror of his ever-shifting moods and the colours of his poetry. Not improbably, Jeremiah's family was descended from the line of Abiathar, David's companion, the last high-priest of Eli's house, who was banished by Solomon to Anathoth, where his "fields" lay (1 Kings 2 26. 27). His father Hilkiah (1 1 : *Chilqiyyáhu*) cannot have been identical with Josiah's high-priest of that name, the man who made the memorable discovery of the Law-book in the temple (2 Kings 22 8). Jeremiah evidently stood in no connexion with the temple-authorities ; and despite his long residence in Jerusalem and his intense devotion to it, he was a genuine countryman, with a keen eye for the city's vices (5 1 6 6. 7 13 27, etc.), ready to cry, "Oh for a lodge in the wilderness!" (9 2) and eager to escape to Anathoth the moment that the siege of Jerusalem was relaxed (37 11). He puts "the men of Judah" before "the inhabitants of Jerusalem" in coupling them together (4 4 11 2. 6. 9. 12 32 12), whereas Isaiah's order is the reverse of this (Isa. 5 3 22 21).

The title prefixed to the Book is full and precise, and has been carefully drawn up : "The words of Yirmyáhu, son of Chilqiyyáhu, of the priests that were in ʿAnāthoth in the land of Bin-yamín ; to whom the word of Yahwéh came

in the days of Yo'shiyyáhu, son of 'Amón king of Yudáh, in the thirteenth year of his reign. It came further in the days of Yehoyaqím, son of Yo'shiyyáhu king of Yudáh, unto the end of the eleventh year of Tsidqiyyáhu, son of Yo'shiyyáhu king of Yudáh, unto the captivity of Yerushalém in the fifth month" (1 1-3). This account, while it ignores the closing events of Jeremiah's ministry as this was continued in Judæa and Egypt subsequently to the overthrow of Zedekiah (chs. 40–44), correctly indicates the two chief periods of the prophet's work, and their detachment from each other. "The word of Jehovah came" to him first in the year 628, seven years before the Josianic reformation, while the country was yet steeped in the idolatry and moral corruption of Manasseh's age. To this period the earliest preaching of Jeremiah applies, being contemporary with that of Zephaniah and of similar scope (see pp. 24–33 above). Then a long silence fell on the prophet. We catch a glimpse in ch. 11 1-8 of some kind of missionary campaign carried on by Jeremiah in promotion, as it seems, of the Deuteronomic Law, for "the words of this covenant" in that place cannot well mean anything else than the Torah then delivered to the people.

Singularly enough, this passage, and the ad-

verse reference of 8 8, are the only direct allusions Jeremiah makes to the Deuteronomic code or to any written law. The character and administration of Josiah won his respect (22 15. 16); but his pages leave us entirely in the dark about the king's work in the reformation of religion—a phenomenon that has its parallel in the relations of Isaiah to Hezekiah (see Vol. II, pp. 20–22). While his language is affected by the Deuteronomic *style*, the Deuteronomic *doctrine* appears to be studiously avoided. The ultimate significance of the publication of the Torah and the centralization of worship seems to have escaped Jeremiah, under his strong conviction of the immediate failure of Josiah's movement. He saw too clearly that the popular reforms were a mere "cleansing of the outside of cup and platter," which would not avert Jehovah's punitive wrath: his hope fixed itself upon the coming of "days when Jehovah would put His law in the inward parts" of His people and "write it in their hearts," and no longer on tables of stone or leaves of papyrus (31 31-34). After the first issuing and enforcement of Hilkiah's book, Jeremiah took up an attitude of reserve in regard to it; so far as his extant prophecies show, no "word of Jehovah came" to him in the twelve years that elapsed between Josiah's reform and

death. He stood aside, letting other men try their plans for the people's salvation ; when they failed, he stepped in again.

Like Zephaniah, Jeremiah had been convinced at the outset and while the old heathen party were still in power, that the kingdom of Judah was doomed ; the two young prophets saw the instruments of its destruction in the oncoming Scythian hordes. The ruin threatening from this quarter was averted (see pp. 31–32) ; the highlands of Judah escaped the barbarian irruption, and the new king, on coming of age, proved a successful ruler and a devoted servant of Jehovah (see pp. 1–4, 13–15). The covenant of the nation with its God was re-enacted, under what seemed the most favourable omens ; Jeremiah himself took part in preaching it. The reproof of ch. 8 8—"How do ye say, 'We are wise, and the law of Jehovah is with us'? But, behold, the false pen of the scribes hath falsified it!"—cannot have been aimed at the publishers of Josiah's Torah ; it points to some early attempt made to disseminate vitiated copies, in the interest of the old corruptions (comp. vv. 4-7). Deuteronomy attacked the very evils against which Jeremiah's life was directed—the idolatrous local cults, and the popular immorality ; he could not fail to sympathize with its spirit

and intent; but the method of its promoters was not his, and only for a moment could he share their hopes of a national salvation. He viewed with instinctive distrust the attempt to impose external conformity on a people whose disposition was alien from the pure worship and law of Jehovah. In fact, *Jeremiah no longer believed in a state religion*: "all these maxims of government," as Marti well says, "these royal decrees in favour of the faith of Jehovah," were in his eyes "only a sowing among thorns"; there was in them "no breaking up of the fallow ground" (4 3); the reformation was imposed, not spontaneous; it came from the king's will instead of the people's heart.

At the same time, the awful predictions fulminated by Jeremiah and Zephaniah since the year 628 had for the present failed; the prophet felt himself discredited as a messenger of judgement, and his mouth was shut. To this seeming frustration of his earlier warnings the strange outcry of ch. 20 7ff. is most plausibly referred: "O Jehovah, Thou hast befooled me, and I have been made a fool of!—I am become a laughing-stock all the day; every one mocketh me. For so often as I speak, I must cry out, I must exclaim, 'Violence' and 'Oppression'; then the word of Jehovah is made a reproach to

me, and a derision all the day." For twenty years he was crying "Wolf, wolf," and the fold was still spared! In the end the prophet's foresight was vindicated, with awful emphasis; but until the fatal year 608, events moved in a course that falsified his jeremiads. With the fall of Josiah at Megiddo, the well-intentioned experiment of reformation to order came to an end.

Chs. 1–6 echo, from some distance (see pp. 113–114 above), the pre-reformation preaching of Jeremiah. "In the beginning of the reign of Jehoiakim, the son of Josiah" (26 1; comp. 1 3), he resumed his activity. The accession of this king opened a disastrous era for Judæa. "The people of the land" had raised his younger brother Jehoahaz to the throne, on whom Jeremiah pronounces an elegy in ch. 22 10-12; but the conqueror of Megiddo, Pharaoh-Necho, annulled the popular choice after three months, substituting in his own interest Eliakim (Jehoiakim), whose unfitness was notorious. Jeremiah set himself to stem the tide of reaction that ensued on the elevation of this unprincipled young monarch. His address at this crisis had a consequence almost fatal to the preacher (26 10-19). This important deliverance, briefly summarized in 26 1-9, appears to be given *in extenso* in

chs. 7 1–8 3 (comp. 7 2-7 with 26 2. 3; 7 12-15 with 26 6. 9; 7 4. 10. 11 with 26 12); ch. 7 is introduced by the formula, "The word that came to Jeremiah from Jehovah" ("came this word from Jehovah," 26 1),—an expression pointing to a new and specific revelation made to the prophet after some interval, and which seems to be recalled by the language of 1 3a.

From this moment began the struggle between prophet and king, which culminated "in the fourth year of Jehoiakim" and "the first year of Nebuchadrezzar, king of Babylon" (25 1 36 1 45 1) —soon after the battle of Carchemish (605), terminating the short-lived Egyptian ascendency —when through Jeremiah Jehovah proclaimed the Babylonian victor His emperor-elect and sent round "the cup of the wine of His fury" for "all the nations" to drink, beginning from Jerusalem (25 15-29). The daring prophet, who addressed his discourse of doom to "all the people of Judah and all the inhabitants of Jerusalem" (presumably at some festival gathering), was put under restraint; but he occupied his leisure in writing out his oracles, as delivered up to date, which he instructed his secretary Baruch to *read* to the people "in Jehovah's house" upon "the fast-day"—a fast ordered doubtless in view of the approach of the

Chaldæans. This reading took place in "the fifth year of Jehoiakim" (36 1-10). The roll in Baruch's hand was brought ultimately to the king, who, after hearing the sheets read, ran his knife through them and flung them into the fire (vv. 20-24). Jeremiah and Baruch, by a Divine providence, escaped Jehoiakim's vengeance (26 26)—evidently they had friends at court; and the destroyed manuscript was reproduced by Baruch, writing at Jeremiah's dictation, with "many like words" added thereto. The volume thus composed in the winter of 604–603 forms the basis of the existing Book of Jeremiah; see p. 112 ff., also notes on p. 132.

Ch. 22 13-19 goes to account for Jehoiakim's hatred of Jeremiah. This passage is a fierce tirade against the king's extortion and the forced labour exacted in the building of his palace—to be dated in the early and comparatively prosperous years of his reign; it concludes by predicting for him "the burial of an ass"; a similar execration followed on the burning of Baruch's roll (36 30). Jehoiakim died during the war with Nebuchadrezzar; but the historians, though condemning his evil rule, record nothing extraordinary concerning the manner of his death or sepulture (2 Kings 23 36–24 6, 2 Chron. 36 5-8). The incident of the Rechabites, who took refuge

in Jerusalem during the siege at the end of Jehoiakim's reign, is the only other occurrence of Jeremiah's life, beside the above, that is expressly referred to "the days of Jehoiakim." Many of Jeremiah's undated speeches bear internal signs of belonging to this period—the bulk indeed of those contained in chs. 7–20 (see pp. 119–120 above);[1] to these should be added most of the Dooms upon the Foreign Nations (see pp. 117, 137–138).

Jehoiakim died in the course of the struggle with Babylon, on which he had presumptuously entered. The youthful Jehoiachin (*Yeho-yakin*, 2 Kings 24 6-9; called *Yekonyah* in 1 Chron. 3 16 and Jer. 24, and *Konyahu* in Jer. 22 24-28 and 37 1), who shares his father's ill reputation, held the insecure throne but three months, until Jerusalem was surrendered to Nebuchadrezzar. On this ensued the first deportation to Babylon (2 Kings 24 8-16). The prophet pronounced against Jehoiachin sentence of perpetual banishment (Jer. 22 24-29), in spite of which the nationalist party for long set their hopes on his restoration (28 4); he languished in prison for thirty-seven years, when Nebuchadrezzar's successor released him and gave him a place in the court at Babylon (2 Kings 25 27-30). Zerubbabel, who held a distinguished rank among the restored

[1] On the title of 27 1, see p. 124.

exiles, was Jehoiachin's grandson. Josiah's remaining and third son Mattaniah, with his name changed to Zedekiah (*Tsidqiyyahu*), was set on the throne by Nebuchadrezzar, who preferred to rule Judæa through the native dynasty, and supposed he had rendered the principality powerless by removing the flower of its population.

The relations of Jeremiah with Zedekiah, the last of the kings of Judah, are of lively interest. Zedekiah sinned rather through weakness and incapacity than through violence of temper; he consulted Jeremiah more than once, but wanted the resolution to act on the prophet's advice. The inferior Judæan chiefs who now came into power, instead of learning prudence by the lesson of 597, played a reckless and fanatical part: listening to the promptings of neighbouring vassal states and relying on the help of Egypt, the old "broken reed" of Isaiah's time, they pushed Zedekiah into treasonable action (Jer. 27 2. 3, 28 1-4, 25 19, 37 5-7; Ezek. 17 15. 17). In the first instance, when Zedekiah in his fourth year had entertained some plot against his suzerain (comp. 27 1-3 [R.V. margin] with 28 1. 2), he escaped punishment by prompt submission, going up to Babylon to renew in person his pledges of loyalty (51 59). On this occasion,

as it is related in 51 59-64, Jeremiah sent by a friendly hand a copy of some oracle against Babylon to be sunk in the Euphrates with the words, "Thus shall Babylon sink, and shall not rise again." This roll, we are told, contained the "judgements" delivered in the foregoing chapters (50, 51; but see pp. 134–137 above). As to the ultimate fate of Babylon, Jeremiah and Habakkuk were at one (comp. pp. 58–59). Either then or earlier, Zedekiah took a peculiarly solemn oath of fealty to the Chaldæan sovereign, the breach of which Ezekiel regarded as unpardonable (Ezek. 17 11–20, 21 24-27; comp. 2 Chron. 36 13). Jeremiah cherished a kindlier feeling for this unhappy monarch (21 9 34 4. 5) and did his best to save him.

We have no dated utterance of Jeremiah's in Zedekiah's reign earlier than its fourth year, 593, when (as indicated above) the kings of Edom, Moab, Ammon, Tyre and Zidon, sent "messengers" to Jerusalem with a view to concert measures against the Chaldæan overlord. Jeremiah was instructed to "make bands and bars and put them on his neck," then to send these through the ambassadors to the several kings in token of the subjection due to Babylon, the maintenance of which is enjoined upon them under the severest threats (ch. 27).

This demonstration brought Jeremiah into direct conflict with the patriotic party. Forthwith "Chananyah ben-'Azzur, the prophet," confronted Jeremiah in the temple with the words, "Thus speaketh Jehovah of hosts, the God of Israel, saying, I have broken the yoke of the king of Babylon" (28 1-4); "within two full years," he predicts, the sacred vessels of which the temple had been despoiled will be replaced, and Jeconiah and his fellow exiles will be restored to their native land. Suiting the action to the word, Hananiah snatches off the wooden yoke Jeremiah was wearing, and breaks it in two before priests and people. For the moment the prophet of evil is confounded; Jeremiah can only say, "Amen! may Jehovah do so; may Jehovah perform thy words that thou hast prophesied!" But shortly "the word of Jehovah came" again "to Jeremiah," bidding him to substitute "bars of iron" for the broken bars of wood, and sentencing Hananiah to death as a lying prophet—a fate which overtook the latter, we are told, in two months from this date (comp. vv. 1 and 17).

Hananiah represented the majority of the official prophets of the time, who inflamed the popular passions by preaching the inviolability of Zion and promised a repetition of the deliverance of the city from Sennacherib. A superstitious

patriotism had gathered round the temple and its worship since the Josianic reforms: according to the doctrine of the school of Hananiah, Jehovah was bound by the re-established covenant to defend His house, so long as the sacred institutions were maintained. Formal loyalty to the Deuteronomic cultus was combined with a gross disregard of its ethical demands, and the people "trusted," as Jeremiah had declared years ago (7 4-11), "in lying words, saying, 'The temple of Jehovah is this!'" and when they had escaped calamity, they would "come and stand before" Jehovah "in the house called by His name, and say, 'We have been delivered'—to do, forsooth, all these abominations!" thus turning "His house into a robbers' den!" The reformation of 621 had produced, as Jeremiah seems to have expected almost from the beginning, a generation of thorough-paced pharisees; the type of zealotry which brought destruction on Jerusalem in the first century of our era was in full operation at its overthrow in the sixth century before Christ. Jeremiah stood alone confronting prophets[1] and priests, king, princes, and people. His terrible philippic against the

[1] The position of Jeremiah's contemporaries, Habakkuk and the author of Zech. 12-14, has been fully discussed in Chs. XXII and XXIII.

prophets, ch. 23 9-40, was launched on this occasion or not very much later. In the existing order of the Book, it follows up the denunciation of the kings—or "shepherds" (a term probably including the princes besides)—of Judah (21 11–23 4): kings and prophets, most of all the latter, were the united causes of Israel's undoing. Zephaniah (3 4) condemned the prophets and priests of thirty years earlier in the like strain; but nowhere else in the Old Testament, since the encounter of Micaiah ben-Imlah and Zedekiah ben-Kena'anah (1 Kings 22) before king Ahab, has the struggle between the true and false prophecy come out in so dramatic a form. Whether it was that Jeremiah's warning, confirmed by the death of his opponent, prevailed with Zedekiah or that the king's courage failed him, he made his peace this time with the Babylonian overlord; it was not till five years later (39 1), in 588 B.C., that the actual revolt burst out.

Before this time and while Judæa was in peaceful intercourse with Babylon, communications had passed between Jeremiah and the exiles of 597, whom he likens in ch. 24 to a basket of "good figs" in comparison with the "very bad figs" left behind. He addressed a letter to "the residue of the elders of the captivity" (under whom the captives preserved

their native organization) "and to the priests and to the prophets" (amongst these, Ezekiel was surely known to him), "and to all the people whom Nebuchadrezzar had carried away captive," exhorting them to make themselves at home where they are settled and to behave as good citizens, at the same time "seeking Jehovah" in the foreign land "with all their heart," because their banishment is to last "seventy years" (ch. 29); they must reject the delusive hopes held out by certain prophets who were playing in Babylonia the rôle adopted to his ruin by Hananiah in Jerusalem. Two of these deceivers, Ahab and Zedekiah, Jeremiah denounces by name; these men Nebuchadrezzar, it is foretold, "will roast by fire,"—doubtless for provoking the exiles to rebellion (vv. 21-23). In contemptuous reply to this attack, the ringleader of the fanatics in Babylon, named Shemaiah ("Shemaʿyahu the Nechelāmite") wrote to "Tsephanyah, son of Maʿaseyah, the priest" at Jerusalem, asking that Jeremiah be "put in the stocks" as one "that is mad and acts the prophet" (vv. 25-29); Jeremiah retorts by a curse pronounced on his accuser in Jehovah's name (vv. 30-32). With this lively and instructive episode Jeremiah's ministry to the exiles in the east comes to an end.

The second siege of Jerusalem by Nebuchadrezzar, beginning in the year 588, the ninth of Zedekiah's reign, brought Jeremiah's relations with the government to an acute stage. In the first year of Jehoiakim's reign he had narrowly escaped a traitor's death (ch. 26); in the course of the same reign he was scourged and put in the stocks by Pashhur, the priest in charge of the temple, in order to silence or discredit him (ch. 20). From that time Jeremiah appears to have been forbidden access to the temple and the opportunity of public preaching. He was obliged to send Baruch to *read* to the people what he had wished to say, at the crisis of Jehoiakim's fourth year (ch. 36). The marvel is that he escaped throughout this reign the fate which actually fell on his disciple Uriah (*'Uriyyah*), whom Jehoiakim dragged for execution out of Egypt, whither he had fled from the king's displeasure (26 20-24). During the later years of Jeremiah's ministry in Jerusalem the danger came from "the princes" and "the men of war," rather than the king. At the outset Zedekiah withstood the war-party and the influence of foreign intrigue, and strove to keep faith with Babylon; in the end, like Hezekiah 120 years before, he was carried into rebellion by the rising tide of nationalism, which under the

instigation of prophets and priests assumed a religious as well as a patriotic character. Nebuchadrezzar dealt promptly with the Judæan revolt; his troops appeared before Jerusalem in the tenth month of Zedekiah's ninth year—January 588; the siege, which was desperately maintained, and interrupted by an abortive diversion from the side of Egypt, lasted for eighteen months.

Twice the king publicly appealed to Jeremiah, by deputation — that he should "inquire of Jehovah for us" and "pray unto Jehovah our God for us"—first at the commencement of the war (21 1-10), and then later on, when the besieging army was drawn off to meet the Egyptians (37 3-10): the occasions are clearly distinct, though "Zephaniah the priest" (comp. 29 25. 29) took part in both meetings. Jeremiah in both instances declares Jehovah to be inexorable, promising bare "life" only to those who go over to the Chaldæans. Naturally therefore, when Jeremiah took the opportunity of the relaxation of the siege to visit Anathoth, he was suspected of desertion and thereupon scourged and thrown into prison (37 11-21). The prophet had "remained there many days," probably till the Chaldæans resumed the investment, when Zedekiah had him brought to the palace for a secret

consultation. Though Jeremiah could only repeat his former uncompromising response, the king did not refuse his plea for milder treatment, and he was placed in "the court of the guard" with a provision for his maintenance (37 16-21).

In this more open custody Jeremiah had some access to "the people," which he used in urging them to save their lives by "going out to the Chaldæans" (38 1-3; comp. 32 2. 8. 12). The military authorities of course regarded this as treason, and "the princes" insisted with the king on Jeremiah's execution (38 4. 5). He was flung into an empty well, where he must soon have perished but for the compassion of an Ethiopian servant of the court, who obtained leave from the king to rescue him; and he was restored to "the court of the guard" (vv. 6-13). Once more, as the siege drew to its close, Zedekiah asked the prophet's advice, who counselled surrender, assuring him of personal safety on this condition. Once more Zedekiah hesitated, and he was lost; his attempt to escape, when the city was on the point of capture, miscarried. The last sight the luckless king looked on was the slaughter of his sons; then he was blinded, and so led a prisoner to Babylon.

The conclusion of Jeremiah's story is told in chs. 39–44, and is of the like melancholy tenor.

Nebuchadrezzar had intelligence of the part Jeremiah had taken in urging his people to keep faith with their suzerain, and gave orders for his liberation. He elected to stay with the poor remnant of the Judæans under the charge of Gedaliah, the son of his old protector Ahikam (26 24), who had probably followed his advice in surrendering to the Chaldæans. He witnessed the assassination of Gedaliah; and was fated to have his prophetic counsel once again asked and disobeyed, for the survivors inquired through him whether they should take refuge in Egypt, and persisted in doing so, carrying the prophet along with them, in spite of his warning against this step. Jeremiah protested, both before the journey and when the emigrants arrived at Tahpanhes by the Nile, that the sword of Nebuchadrezzar, and the very miseries from which they sought flight, would follow them into Egypt. The prophet had the extreme grief of seeing his fellow-exiles resume, and impudently defend, the idolatries which had brought Jehovah's wrath upon them in their own land (ch. 44).[1] The Jewish tradition relates, only too

[1] Jer. 44 1 speaks of the Jewish fugitives as settling "at Migdol, and at Tahpanhes, and at Noph" (Memphis), which were cities of Lower Egypt, and also "in the country of *Pathros*"—a name for Upper Egypt or the Thebaid (see

probably, that this most heroic of the prophets died by stoning at the hands of his compatriots in Egypt, who were infuriated at his rebukes.

Hastings' *D.B.* on "Pathros"). A bundle of papyri has lately been unearthed at Assouan, by the First Cataract of the Nile, in this region, which proceeds from the Jewish colony living there between the years 471 and 411 B.C.—contemporary, that is, with Ezra and Nehemiah. These documents are Aramaic—in a dialect resembling that of the Aramaic of the so-called Chaldee parts of the Books of Ezra and Daniel—the common language of the Persian empire, in which Egypt was at that time included. They are business memoranda of various kinds, reflecting the life of a numerous and comparatively prosperous community in active intercourse with its Egyptian neighbours. Evidently at this time—a century later than the prophet's day—the curse of Jer. 44 12 14 had not fallen on the Jews of Pathros; and they had not continued in the idolatry that Jeremiah denounces. There is satisfactory proof in these old papers, written 2,350 years ago, that the Egyptian Jews returned to the faith of Jehovah. It is a comfort to think that Jeremiah's dying protest was not in vain. See the very interesting account of the matter in the work entitled *Aramaic Papyri discovered at Assuan*, edited by A. H. Sayce and A. E. Cowley (London, 1906).

CHAPTER XXVI

THE DISCIPLINE OF JEREMIAH

Self-revelations of the Book of Jeremiah—Stages of his Inner Life—Reluctance at his Call—Repugnance toward his Mission—Domestic Ties forbidden—Early Prophecies of Denunciation—Effect on the People—The Deuteronomic Reformation—Attitude toward the Written Law—Jeremiah nonplussed—Time of Disillusion—Shock of Megiddo—Superstitious Trust in the Temple—Early Years of Jehoiakim—Drought following on Defeat—Jeremiah's *amour-propre*—Taunts against Jeremiah—His Self-contradictions—Religious Leaders united against Jeremiah—Imprisonment by Pashhur—The Final Paroxysm—Accusation against God—*Per Crucem ad Lucem*—The Roll read to Jehoiakim—The Cup of Jehovah's Anger for the Nations—Jeremiah's Mellowing—Purchase of the Anathoth Field—Book of Israel's Future—The Law in the Heart.

WE have sketched in the last chapter the outward course of this man of sorrows, who in his long career passed through almost every kind of anguish that a minister of God

and a lover of his people can endure. Jeremiah's inner experience can be traced through a series of self-revealing passages, with less certainty as to the order of time but with a sufficiently clear apprehension of the growth of his faith and his spiritual character. Chs. 1, 8 18 and 9 1. 2, 11 18-23, 15 10. 11 and 15-21, 16 1-9, 20, 26, and 30–33 furnish the salient points in the history of this great soul ; they disclose the protracted struggle of a sensitive and yet sternly loyal and upright nature with a most cruel vocation, its progress from youthful consecration and a brave acceptance of the Divine will through doubt and moods of passionate revolt to complete self-conquest, ending in settled peace and a far-seeing assurance of God's victory over the stubborn and lawless heart of man.

This inner development, which makes the story of one man an epitome and prophetic mirror of God's dealings with His people in all times, may be divided into five successive stages: (1) Jeremiah's call to the prophetic office in early life ; (2) the youthful period of fierce denunciation, which extended from 628 to 621 B.C. and was antecedent to the reforms of Josiah ; (3) the time of disillusion and silence, 621–608, ensuing upon the public reformation ; (4) the period of decisive conflict, in the Judæan state

and within Jeremiah's breast, which was opened by the fall of Josiah at the battle of Megiddo and terminated with the fourth year of Jehoiakim (ch. 36 : 604 B.C.), when Jeremiah came to a complete rupture with the king ; (5) the stage of full acquiescence, attained by the prophet amidst thickening national calamity and personal suffering, which extended from the establishment of the Babylonian supremacy (604), through Jehoiakim's rebellion and the first siege and deportation from Jerusalem, through Zedekiah's hapless reign, to the destruction of the city by Nebuchadrezzar and the flight of the Judæan remnant to Egypt, where the prophet-martyr dies.

(1) In *Jeremiah's call* the special nature of his task, and the peculiar temperament of the man, both reveal themselves. He was to be, like none before him, "a prophet unto the nations" (1 5), the spiritual exponent of a coming world-revolution and the mouthpiece of God's purpose therein accomplished. With Jehovah's "words put in his mouth," this shrinking, diffident young man is "set over the nations and over the kingdoms, to pluck up and to break down, and to build and to plant" (vv. 9. 10). For Israel is now to be swept into the vortex of world-politics ; and Jeremiah presides over a grand epoch of

destruction and reconstruction in the Divine government of mankind. This seer witnessed and interpreted the great Scythian irruption, the fall of Assyria, the brilliant but illusive revival of the Israelite nationality under Josiah, the brief resuscitation of the Egyptian dominion, the rise of the Median and Chaldæan empires, and the destruction of the Davidic monarchy with its city and sanctuary. Never was there crowded into a single lifetime a train of more momentous events, of more swift and violent changes in the landscape of history. The political order existing around Jeremiah in 628, when his mission began, was completely swept away by the date of his death some forty-five years later; but he had sown the seeds of a new creation, which were to germinate hiddenly through the exile of his people and their centuries of tribulation, that they might fructify till the end of time. The two symbols attached to Jeremiah's inaugural revelation, those of *the early-blossoming almond* and *the seething-pot looking northwards* (vv. 11-14), picture the oncoming of the destined changes.

The reluctance of Jeremiah toward his call is characteristic for his career. His was not the prompt and eager spirit of Isaiah crying out, "Here am I! send me," so soon as his lips felt God's fire and the summons reached his ear;

nor the unquestioning soul of Amos, to whom Jehovah's voice came with a note resounding and imperative as that of the lion roaring in the forest: he meets his commission with the reply, "Ah, Lord Jehovah! behold, I cannot speak, for I am but a boy!" He feels no aptitude for public speech; his youth, to begin with, is an insuperable bar. Jeremiah was sensible all along of the inadequacy of his powers and the bitterness of his task. The contempt and unbelief of his kindred, the insult and violence that he repeatedly suffered from all classes of his people, the appearance of disloyalty and of sympathy with his country's oppressors that attached to many of his oracles, wounded his sensibilities in every part.

We saw in the experience of Habakkuk how the naïve faith of the older prophecy in Jehovah's rule was troubled as it began to face the more complicated problems of world-life and national destiny (see pp. 55–59). Like his contemporary, Jeremiah had his sceptical moments; he broke out more than once into protest against the harsh discipline of Providence; but the trial assumed in his case a more inward and personal form. Jehovah had marked him from his mother's womb for a great errand; yet this errand becomes his shame and torture, until he

curses the day of his birth (comp. 1 5 with 15 10, 20 14-18)! In Jeremiah the tragic mystery of God's dealings with the individual man stands over against the mystery of His dealings with nations in the larger play of human life. It is one of God's miracles—not without its parallels, as in the instance of the fickle Simon who becomes Christ's "rock," or John the apostle of Love who pours out in the Apocalypse the vials of "the unmixed wine of the wrath of God"—it is a fine example of the "strength perfected in weakness," that He should make out of this soft-hearted, tremulous man "a fenced city and an iron pillar and brazen walls," "a tower and a fortress" for Himself amongst His rebel people (see 1 18 6 27 15 20). Besieged by every sort of hostility, assailed by contradiction, ridicule, injury, with the whole force of religious authority and popular feeling enlisted against him—though his heart quaked all the while—Jeremiah stood faithfully alone for God and truth, as a lighthouse on its solitary rock breasting the storms of more than forty of the darkest years that God's kingdom on earth has known.

The oracle of ch. 16, at whatever time published, must have come to the prophet at the beginning of his course, for marriage was contracted, as a rule, in the early years of adult

life. A man of affectionate nature, he is forbidden all wedded alliance, all share in family festivities or mournings; with pathetic iteration he refers in his prophecies to "the voice of mirth and the voice of gladness, the voice of the bridegroom and the voice of the bride," to "the voice of the [household] mill-stones and the light of the candle" (7 34 16 9 25 10 33 11)—he was haunted by the sense of lost domestic bliss. Cut off from social joys and the ties of kindred, Jeremiah must witness by his lonely and uncared-for lot to the miseries impending on his country. His detachment was emphasized by the prophet's expulsion from Anathoth, his native place, where a plot was laid against his life. This circumstance probably occurred earlier than is indicated by the position of the narrative respecting it in 11 18-23. The story reminds us of our Lord's experience at Nazareth.

(2) *The first, youthful period* of Jeremiah's work coincided with the brief ministry of Zephaniah in its occasion and aim; see Chap. XXI. Judæa was then filled with the idolatries set up in Manasseh's reign (1 16; comp. Zeph. 3 1-4). Immorality and oppression were rife amongst all classes; see especially 5 1-9. 26-31 (this chapter reflects Jeremiah's first impressions of Jerusalem —the state of things improved later under

Josiah, according to 22 15-16; comp. Zeph. 3 1-4). Both prophets descry a storm of judgement sweeping down from the north; it is the Scythian invasion, then hanging over South-Western Asia, which they depict in the graphic language of Jer. 5 15-17 6 22-26 and Zeph. 1 2. 3. The preaching of this period, written down some twenty years afterwards (see 36 1. 2), is recalled in chs. 2–6. A notable feature of Jeremiah's teaching at this early time is the comparison he institutes (3 6-18) between the sin of "Israel," the old northern kingdom, and that of "her sister Judah," to the disadvantage of the latter. This tender-hearted prophet, whose eyes in youth were accustomed to the Ephraimite and Trans-jordanic landscape, could never forget the larger Israel nor surrender the unity of the ancient tribes.

Though the critics see in the hopeful passages of chs. 3 14-18 and 4 1-4 signs of interpolation, it is impossible to exclude from the sombre forebodings of the years 628–621 calls to repentance on the prophet's part, and anticipations of relenting in the sinful people (see 3 21-25); nor need we doubt that Jeremiah's powerful and pathetic preaching during those years took visible effect here and there, and had its part in preparing for the reformation in worship which Josiah imposed with the outward acquiescence of the

people. But the general tenor of Jeremiah's utterances was severe and gloomy in the extreme; so much so, that when the danger from the northern hordes passed over and when Josiah's energetic and religious rule brought to Judah an interval of freedom and prosperity unknown for generations, events appeared to have run completely counter to his expectations and his pessimism became an object of ridicule.

(3) *Jeremiah's relation to the Deuteronomic code and the reformation of* 621 is the enigma of his life. The silence of his Book on the subject is even more perplexing than the ignoring by Isaiah of Hezekiah's reforms. Chap. 11 1-8 supplies the only reference pointing in this direction. We cannot follow Duhm and Cornill, who dismiss these paragraphs as unauthentic because they are unsupported by anything else in Jeremiah's recorded preaching. Vv. 1-5, in any case, bear strong marks of originality; and it is impossible to identify "this covenant" (vv. 3. 6) with any other than "the covenant" formally adopted by king and people under the circumstances described in 2 Kings 23 1-3. There is therefore reason to suppose that Jeremiah, while he was not concerned in the discovery and first promulgation of the Torah-book, recognized in Deuteronomy the true principles of Jehovah's

faith and worship and endorsed the action of Josiah in admitting it as the statute law of the kingdom. In keeping with such approval is his commendation of this king in the words of 22 15 ff. Jeremiah is the earliest of the writing prophets in whom the Deuteronomic dialect and manner are traceable. His pages supply numerous and sometimes striking parallels to the language of the Book in question.

The critics referred to find, indeed, in Jer 8 8 a condemnation of the Deuteronomic movement and of the use of any written Law. But this is a violent application of the passage (see p. 182 above), and rests on an exaggerated view of Jeremiah's hostility to the official classes. "How can ye say, *We* are the wise men, and the Torah of Jehovah is in our keeping? Nay, verily; the lying pen of scribes hath turned it into lies!" This rebuke comes from the reactionary time of Jehoiakim; the reproof of those who plumed themselves on the possession of the Law, while they perverted its sense to suit their liking, is in reality a tribute to the genuine Torah. Israel now possessed a Scripture, recognised by all parties; already the heretics had learned to entrench themselves behind corrupted readings or crooked interpretations.

Jeremiah, we gather, accepted the Book of

the Covenant published by Josiah as a true presentation of the national compact with Jehovah, and proclaimed it through city and country in this sense (11 1-8). But his activity in favour of the royal policy was of brief duration.[1] The result of the movement thus inaugurated was grievously disappointing: in regard to places and forms of cultus drastic changes were effected, salutary enough in themselves and of lasting significance; but their action on the life of the people at the time was formal and superficial. The prophet saw too plainly that, with all this outward compliance and enthusiasm for the new order, there was no change of spirit, no "circumcision of the heart," no contrition for the past and inward "turning to Jehovah" (comp. pp. 160–163). The local heathenish altars were abolished; Jehovah's worship was celebrated by a united people at Jerusalem with a splendour and fervour hitherto unknown; but the old sins

[1] Had Jeremiah met the Josianic reform with radical opposition, and even treated the Torah of 2 Kings 22, 23 as *a fraud* (for so Duhm infers from Jer. 8 8), we should have heard a great deal more about the matter than we do; Deuteronomy could not, under such contradiction, have taken the uncontested position which it held in Jewish faith from this time onwards (see pp. 9-11). The silence of Jeremiah on the subject (apart from ch. 11) is much harder to reconcile with the assumption of his hostility to Josiah's Scripture, than with that of his approval and support of it.

flourished, and the national temper was proud and ungodly as before. As this became apparent, Jeremiah withdrew and lapsed into silence. He could not oppose the pious and sanguine young ruler, who was so much deceived by appearances ; he could not lend himself further to methods that "healed lightly the hurt of the daughter of Jehovah's people."

From the date of 11 1-8 until Josiah's death, there is no extant oracle of Jeremiah : gathering up his earlier teaching in the year 604 for the people's benefit, the prophet leaves this period a blank (see pp. 150, 161–162). The awful threats that he and Zephaniah had uttered had come to nothing ; Judah had a popular, religious, and successful king, with whom Jeremiah had no wish to quarrel ; his call to repentance had been, in a certain sense, obeyed, and the Deuteronomic régime was formally enforced by priests and prophets and accepted by the nation. Things had turned out, both for good and evil, far otherwise than the prophet of Jer. 2–6 had prognosticated. Jeremiah was practically *nonplussed* ; and through those twelve years of seeming success but inward chagrin, no "word of Jehovah" seems to have come to His prophet.

This was the time of disillusion and inward testing for Jeremiah—a harder trial hardly

could befall a prophet of God. Jehovah had "set" him "to pluck up and break down, to build and plant"; twenty years have passed, and so far his word has effected nothing for his own people, either in the way of plucking up or new-planting! He had to learn the emptiness of professional and ceremonial and political religion, *the worthlessness of everything else without the law written in the heart.*

(4) Josiah's death in battle at Megiddo pricked the bubble of the national religiousness, that had depended on the glamour of the king's influence and the material prosperity of his reign. The calamity recalled Jeremiah to his mission. "In the beginning of the reign of Jehoiakim the son of Josiah, king of Judah, came this word of Jehovah," bidding His prophet "stand in the court of Jehovah's house, and speak unto all the cities of Judah which come to worship" (26 1-9 = 7 1–8 3). He attacks the popular religion in its tenderest point—*its false reliance on the temple*, which he threatens with a ruin resembling that which fell on the old sanctuary of Shiloh. To the ears of "the priests and the prophets" such words were blasphemy, like those uttered by Stephen 640 years later. But there was enough sound feeling in "the princes and all the people" to save Jeremiah from the death to which the

religious authorities would have hurried him, and he was defended by the example of Micah of Moresheth. The scene of 26 10-19 was prophetic of the trials of Jesus, and His martyr Stephen, on the same ground.

The conflict thus commencing, which Jeremiah had to sustain single-handed, was no longer waged, like the earlier conflict shared with Zephaniah, against open apostasy. It was a more difficult and deeper contention—that of the religion of the spirit against the religion of the letter; he had to expose a shallow and affected conversion. He sets himself to denounce the false Jehovism which built on the possession of the temple and the Law, which had the name of God and the cant of piety constantly in its mouth, and entrenched itself within the forms of the covenant armed with the weapons of fanaticism and self-righteousness. Chs. 7–10[1] belong to this time of the early years of Jehoiakim; so, probably, most of the matter of chs. 14–20, which are undated, and which we identified (p. 118 ff.) with the "many like words" that went to make up the 2nd edition of Jeremiah's burnt volume of 604 B.C. (see p. 166). The episode of 11 18–12 6 is more naturally referred to an earlier point in

[1] Exception should be made of 9 23-10 16, as was shown on p. 116 above.

Jeremiah's course (see p. 185); but the personal passages of (v. 6) 15 (vv. 16, 17) and 18 (vv. 19 and 20) fall within this middle period and disclose the inner strife which then engaged the prophet's soul. We will consider these paragraphs in order; they mirror the quick of Jeremiah's soul-experience:

(v. 6) is the sequel of vv. 4, 5: Jeremiah has accused the people of "backsliding" (v. 6), of knowing not "Jehovah's ordinance" (v. 4), and its teachers of perverting Scripture (v. 8), of "healing lightly" the people's "hurt" and "saying Peace, when there is none" and when "dismay" comes instead of "healing" (v. 11)—"the harvest is passed," cries the prophet, "the summer ended!" This description suits as nearly as well as the turn in the national fortunes brought about by Josiah's death, when the little army of Judah was destroyed and the land laid open to the spoiler (2 Kings 23 29), when the kingdom fell at a stroke under the dominion of Egypt, and the people rushed back into idolatry and open sin (2 Kings 23 32). "The hurt of the daughter of my people" (vv. 21, 22)—an expression peculiar to this discourse—refers to the irreparable wound, for which "Gilead" supplies "no balm" and "no physician" (8 22), inflicted on Judah by the battle of Megiddo and the loss of the national

freedom lately recovered under Josiah. Hence the memorable outcry, "Oh that my head were waters and mine eyes a fountain of tears, that I might weep day and night for the slain of the daughter of my people!" (9 1 = Heb. 8 23).

Even that disaster was not irreparable, had it fallen upon a loyal people; but it only revealed the baseness of the Judæan nature and the hollowness of the social fabric: in the same breath the prophet exclaims, "Oh that I could find a wanderer's lodging-place in the wilderness, that I might leave my people and go from them! For they are all adulterers, a congregation of traitors" (9 2-6 = Heb. 9 1-5). Pity and loathing, love clinging to the sinner and scorn revolting from his sin, have never found more moving expression nor fought more desperately within any breast. Jeremiah is in the mood of Elijah, when the hero-prophet fled before Jezebel, under the despair that seized him in the reaction following his glorious success at mount Carmel. The disappointment gathering silently in his soul since the first days of Josiah's covenant, when the spring of a new life seemed to be coming over the land, breaks out at last in full utterance. The summer and harvest of that springtime have passed, and no fruit remains!

(*b*) The outburst of ch. 15 10 ff. followed at no

long interval upon the lamentations of chs. 8 and 9. Chs. 14 and 15 hang closely together, and the whole discourse is introduced as "the word of Jehovah that came to Jeremiah concerning the drought." The close correspondence of 14 [illegible] with 8 [illegible] 9 1, together with the allusion to the "bereaving of children" and the "multiplying of widows" in 15 7 8, points to the disaster of 608 as recent when this prophecy was uttered. Defeat in battle and foreign subjection had been followed by failure of rain: while the popular prophets had been saying, "Ye shall not see the sword, neither shall ye have famine," this double misery had befallen people and prophets (14 2-6). Jeremiah attempts intercession, speaking for "Judah" and "Zion" in the prayer of 14 19-22: but Jehovah is inexorable—"Though Moses and Samuel stood before Me," He replies, "yet My favour could not be toward this people" (15 1). The same interdict appears to be referred to in 7 16 as pronounced in Jehoiakim's first year, and it is introduced a few verses earlier in this very context after a touching supplication (14 7-9). "Four" ways stand open to the Judæans—they are all ways to destruction! (15 2-4). To this appalling oracle, that mocks their wretchedness, the hearers retort with execrations; and the prophet cries out:

Woe is me, my mother, that thou hast borne me!
A man of strife and a man of contention to the whole land!
I have been no lender, nor borrower of money,
That all of them should curse me! (15 10).[1]

It is torture to this gentle, affectionate nature to pour curses on his people and to hear their curses on himself. Reproach is breaking his heart. The prophet protests that his one desire is for his country's good;[2] then with a quick revulsion he turns to God, calling for vengeance on his maligners, since he bears all this for Jehovah's sake. He is cut off from human happiness; no joy exists for him but in the vindication of Jehovah's word; yet that word brings to its bearer confusion and chagrin! (15–18).

This singular passage of Jeremiah's betrays the *amour-propre* up to this time lurking in the man; he was not yet "made perfect in love."

[1] *The money-lender* is the standing object of popular hatred in the East. In the last line the Hebrew text seems to need a slight correction.

[2] Ver. 11, as it stands in the Received Text, is most obscure. Cornill's emendation of the verse gives it an appropriate and powerful sense: "An 'Amen, Jehovah,' to their execrations [*i.e.* May Jehovah fulfil them!], if I have not interceded with Thee at the time of calamity and want, seeking good for mine enemy!" comp. Ps. 7 2-5. Vv. 13. 14 are strangely out of place; they seem to be a strayed fragment from some other speech of threatening addressed to Judah.

His fellows' revilings raise a storm in his breast: lashed by their undeserved reproaches, he imprecates on them in one breath the very punishment that he deprecated in the last! The revengeful temper the prophet had showed toward his Anathoth neighbours ("Let me see Thy vengeance on them," 11 20), is as yet unpurged. The hope of "seeing one's desire upon one's enemies" was, in fact, a commonplace of Israelite piety (see Pss. 54 7 59 10 112 8 118 7); Jeremiah has still to rise above it. For the present, God answers His servant by the simple assurance that he shall be fortified and shielded in the battle still to be waged with the people's sins (vv. 20. 21; comp. Mic. 3 8).

(c) Chapter 17 is made up of a string of passages of various character, without historical data or links of connexion—vv. 1-4 being a typical Jeremianic doom-oracle; vv. 5-8 running in an abstract sententious vein rare in Jeremiah, though not foreign to him; while vv. 19-27 are a homily on sabbath-keeping, with several peculiar linguistic idioms, which has its only prophetic parallel in Isa. 56 2 and 58 13 (see also Ezek. 20 12. 20, Neh. 13 15-18) and is regarded by critics as an interpolation from Nehemiah's time.[1] In the

[1] Cornill goes too far when he says in his forcible way, commenting on 17 19-27, "This passage runs diametrically

midst of this heterogeneous matter the heart-cry of 17 14-18 shrills out with startling effect. It marks another paroxysm in Jeremiah's agony, which occurred not much later than that just described. Our prophet is now branded with the name of an unpatriotic Israelite, an ill-wisher to his country—a "Pro-Boer" shall we say? The trouble of the drought in the first year of Jehoiakim has passed over; the country has settled down, under the mild suzerainty of Pharaoh-Necho, into comparative comfort. Jeremiah is taunted, perhaps in reply to the oracle of 17 1-4, with the failure of his terrifying threats: "Behold, they say unto me, Where is the word of Jehovah? let it come now!" (ver. 15: comp. Isa. 5 19, 2 Pet. 3 4). The stroke predicted in

counter to all that we know of Jeremiah and his theology. That Jeremiah, who preaches more decidedly than any one else the worthlessness of outward ceremonialism, insisting that Jehovah regards only the heart, and who nowhere else makes the slightest reference to the Sabbath, should have attached such glowing promises to the formal observance of the Sabbath-command . . . and should have made the continued existence of Judah and Jerusalem dependent on this condition, is simply unthinkable." Such critics ride to death, in the case both of Isaiah and Jeremiah, the antipathy of the prophets to legalism. The Fourth Commandment was surely ancient in Israel; it formed one of the bonds of the old covenant between Jehovah and His people. Why should not Jeremiah, on occasion, have made its keeping a test of the heart-loyalty he desiderates?

Josiah's early days had never fallen; the thunder-clouds then gathered on Judah's horizon only to disperse, ushering in a day of sunshine. The fall of Josiah, with the subsequent train of misfortunes, proved less disastrous than was foretold. Twice over the destruction of the city and the exile of the people announced by Jeremiah had been averted: men will not be frightened by him any more. His horrifying visions spring from a malignant heart; and the *wish* for the people's hurt has surely been father to the thought of it!

Thus taunted, Jeremiah makes sad protest to Jehovah, in ver. 16:

As for me, I have not pressed after Thee with prayers for evil;[1]
And the woful day I have not longed for—Thou knowest it!
The issue of my lips hath been before Thee!

Yet one feels that the imprecations of 11 20 and 15 15 gave colour to the charge laid at the prophet's door; in this very place he invokes once more God's wrath on his slanderers, calling for "double destruction" upon them (17 18). Vv. 16

[1] We follow the pointing of the Hebrew adopted by several critics, after the Syriac Version and Aquila: *me-rā'ah*, "because of [in order to seek] evil," instead of *me-rō'eh*, "from being a shepherd" (R.V.).

and 18 contradict each other so sharply, that Cornill denies on this account the authenticity of the latter verse, at any rate of its last clause; but the contradiction lies in Jeremiah's temperament: his heart is torn between pity and indignation. Had he been asked, he might have justified himself by saying that he desires vengeance on his tormentors and the mockers of God's word, not on His people at large, against whom notwithstanding he is compelled to launch Jehovah's terrors.

The outbreak of ch. 18 18-23 is a repetition of those of chs. 11 and 17. Jeremiah sees all the forces of the nation arrayed against him—"the law" of "the priest," "the counsel" of "the wise" (the spokesman of the proverbial *Chokmah*), and "the word" of "the prophet": the three parties prepare a joint impeachment (18); they are bent, it seems, on taking his life (23)—it is now war to the knife between Jeremiah and the religious leaders of Israel. The prophet can do nothing but lodge his complaint with Jehovah, who has failed thus far to vindicate His champion: he appeals to the Heart-searcher, bidding Jehovah "remember how I stood before Thee to speak good for them, to turn away Thy fury from them" (20). That he should be charged with ill-will towards his country, as he is persistently,

vexes the prophet beyond bearing. He pours on his conspiring accusers, on "priest" and "wise man" and "prophet" alike, the blistering curses with which ch. 18 ends.

(*d*) "Come, and let us devise devices against Jeremiah," the priests and prophets had been saying (18 18): his arrest by "Pashchur ben-'Immer the priest," who "beat" him and "put him in the stocks," seems to have been the outcome of this consultation. Baruch relates the circumstances attending this outrage, and Jeremiah's sentence on the perpetrator (20 1-6). The narrative leads up to and explains ch. 20 7-18,[1] which is amongst the most extraordinary passages in Scripture. The war we have been tracing, between Jeremiah's shrinking yet passionate

[1] Duhm, followed by Cornill, excises vv. 11-13—or at least, vv. 12. 13—as being out of keeping with Jeremiah's desperate plight, and introduced by a later hand to relieve the gloom of the passage. He regards ver. 12 as borrowed from 11 20, and ver. 13 as coming from the Psalter. But why should not Jeremiah, like other saints, have sung Psalms in prison? These violent surges and alternations of feeling, the passage from defiance to despair, are psychologically true, and characteristic of the nervous temperament in distracting situations. It is one of the commonest errors of critics to reduce their authors to a false consistency, to ignore the fluctuations of moods and changes of posture that are inevitable in high-strung, impressionable natures, such as those of the prophets commonly were.

nature and the stern compulsion of Jehovah's will, reaches here its decisive encounter. The prophet has now to taste, beyond "smiting with the tongue," the indignity of stripes and public contumely—a punishment worse to him than death. He is made a gazing-stock at the temple-gates, exhibited as a common railer and enemy of the peace to all Jerusalem. Next day Pashhur let Jeremiah out of the stocks; but from this time forward he was inhibited from preaching in the temple-court, the only place where the people in assembly could be reached. His adversaries had succeeded, they thought, in making the troublesome prophet impotent for harm.

This climax of insolent wrong drives Jeremiah quite past his patience; and his hot heart vents itself in a volcanic outburst, charged with the grief and suffering of twenty years. He turns first to Pashhur, and nicknames him *Magor-missabib* (*Terror-round-about*), for an omen of his fate (3-6). Then he accosts Jehovah, whom he charges with having used His strength to deceive a weak man and send him on a fool's errand. The doom he has been ordered to announce for so many years has never come, and the messenger of Jehovah gets laughter and blows for his pains (7. 8). Fain would he be silent: then Jehovah's word is made "as a

burning in his bones"; he must out with it,—only to meet the scornful unbelief and malicious plotting of those dearest to him. So he is tossed to and fro, between the terrible yet unfulfilled word of Jehovah and the contempt of his people. God affrights him with His judgements, compelling him to utter them and then deserting him; men treat him as half-mad and half-malignant. He is baited and bestead on all sides; he can endure no more!—and after a moment's reversion to the mood of confidence and taunting toward his persecutors (12. 13), Jeremiah breaks out into the awful cry, that in modern times might have translated itself into suicide:

> Cursed is the day wherein I was born!
> . . . . . .
> Wherefore came I forth from the womb to see trouble and misery,
> And that my days should end in shame! (vv. 14-18)[1]

[1] Hitzig and some others would separate vv. 14-18 from the foregoing, regarding them as the product of Jeremiah's later sufferings during the final agony of the siege in Zedekiah's reign. But the crisis of his inner struggle came about long before this.

Probably Duhm is right when he emends the text of ver. 15, making the execrations of vv. 16. 17 refer to the prophet's *birthday* (comp. Job 3 3-10), not to the bearer of the tidings of his birth.

Jeremiah has now touched bottom, as one may say; he has reached the nadir of his despair. With the consciousness he had of his supernatural call, of the fact that he was "consecrated before he came forth out of the womb" and "appointed a prophet unto the nations," the imprecation of 20 14-18 was nothing short of a repudiation of his mission and the teaching of his life. *God has played with him and made a fool of him:* so Jeremiah, for the moment, believed and said; and so it is set down "for our admonition." We detected at the beginning the root of Jeremiah's discontent, the cause of his wild anger against his persecutors and his reproachings of God, in the man's self-love; he was touched with the spirit that made Jonah sulk beneath his gourd and clamour for death on its perishing, because Nineveh still stood after he had proclaimed its ruin. But who are we to condemn the prophet for his whirling speech? It was a veritable Calvary to which he was brought; all we can say is, that when "led like a lamb to the slaughter" (see 11 19), Jeremiah proved himself unequal to "the Lamb of God, that taketh away the sin of the world." The forerunner fell short of the perfect example,—"who did no sin; who, when He was reviled, reviled not again; when He suffered, threatened not."

The Lord, who "knoweth our frame," would not take His over-wrought servant at his word; Jeremiah was spared to "endure to the end," that he might "be saved." His recording of the train of inward revolts and fightings against God that marked his course, is evidence that he had risen above them and that the bitterness passed from his soul; he became a wholly chastened man, purged of the old leaven and with the law written deep in his heart, ready without a murmur to do Jehovah's will and able to say, "Though He slay me, I will trust in Him." In this calmer frame and with the fever of his spirit spent, the prophet was prepared for the crisis of the year 605–4, and for the new phase upon which Israel's destiny entered in its collision with Babylon. Chap. 20 is the story of Jeremiah's Gethsemane.

(5) "The fourth year of Jehoiakim" (605) was the year of the fateful battle of Carchemish (on the upper Euphrates), which broke the Egyptian power and brought Nebuchadrezzar on to the scene of Palestinian politics. This event was a new summons to Jeremiah, who had been silenced by the occurrences of chs. 19, 20. His old prediction of twenty-three years ago, that "out of the north evil shall break forth" (1 14 4 6 6 1), is going to take fulfilment in a way

undreamed of then ; and he might well expect that the portent would be visible to others. He recalls therefore those former predictions, the cause to him of so much undeserved reproach, and puts them, condensed, into *a book*,[1] which Baruch prepares for reading to the assembly of the people in the temple-court, from which Jeremiah is still excluded. Not till "the ninth month" of the next year, in the winter of 604, did the opportunity for reading the roll arrive, when a national fast was proclaimed,—as we may conjecture, on the demand of submission to Babylon. Baruch's report, in ch. 36 1-8 (see ver. 7), goes to show that Jeremiah made this attempt in a tender and hopeful spirit ; he had shaken off the despondency of 20 14-18, and felt himself quite reinstated as Jehovah's messenger. The result of the appeal has been described in pp. 164–166 ; it was the last chance for Jerusalem and the royal dynasty, and it was rejected. Vv. 30 and 31 pronounce, with judicial solemnity, the doom which nothing can now avert : "Thus saith Jehovah concerning Jehoiakim, king of Judah : he shall have none to sit upon the throne of David ; and his dead body shall be cast out in the day to the heat, and in the night to the frost. And I will punish him and his

[1] For the contents of this roll, see pp. 142–144 above.

seed, and his servants, for their iniquity; and I will bring upon them, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and upon the men of Judah, all the evil that I have pronounced upon them, but they hearkened not."

Jeremiah, we must remember, was anointed "a prophet to *the nations*." Hitherto he seems to have dealt solely with his own people; but his eye now sweeps the wider horizon. He delivers at this conjuncture Jehovah's judgement on all the circle of peoples affected along with his own by the victory of the Chaldæans. In the rise of Nebuchadrezzar he discerned the hidden goal and coming "day of Jehovah" for which prophecy had long been making. As chap. 25 informs us, "in the fourth year of Jehoiakim," on the morrow of Carchemish, Jehovah bade the prophet proclaim "Nebuchadrezzar, the king of Babylon, as *His servant*" (*v.*), and bade him put into his hand "the cup of the wine of His fury," that he might "cause all the nations to drink it" (*vv.* 15). One after another the heathen powers, headed by Jerusalem, come up in imposing procession to drink their portion of this deadly draught: "Pharaoh, king of Egypt . . . and all the kings of the Philistines . . . Edom and Moab and the children of Ammon . . . all the kings of Tyre and all the kings of

Zidon and the kings of the coast-land beyond the sea . . . Dedan and Teman and Buz . . . and all the kings of Arabia . . . and all the kings of Elam and all the kings of the Medes, and all the kings of the north near and far . . . and all the kingdoms of the world, which are upon the face of the earth" (18-28). For, in fact, "Jehovah hath a controversy"—not with Israel alone—but "with the nations; He will plead with all flesh; as for the wicked, He will give them to the sword" (30. 31). The collection of Dooms of the Nations placed at the end of the Book of Jeremiah, in chs. 46–51, is a redaction, drawn up in the first instance by Baruch and supplemented by a later hand (see pp. 134–137), of the oracles originally uttered in the year 605, which formed the ingredients of "the cup of reeling" that Jeremiah handed round to the world-potentates of his day. The prophet has risen at length to the grandeur of his vocation. The man whom we saw "shaken like a reed with the wind" of popular displeasure, though still Jehoiakim's prisoner, speaks as God's judge over the nations; by his word he "plucks up and breaks down" the mightiest kingdoms; thrones and dominions will fall at his breath.

When Jehoiakim ran his penknife through Jeremiah's pages, the doom of Judah was sealed.

Princes, people, and king, in their dealings with the Chaldæan power through the remaining sixteen years, passed from one act of folly and treachery to another, Jeremiah stoutly expostulating at every opportunity. But we find in all the severity of his language and the extremity of his sufferings, after the interior crisis of ch. 20, no sign of the personal resentment and the recalcitrance toward God so painfully in evidence before that date. The encounter with the prophet Hananiah (ch. 28) shows in Jeremiah the dignified self-possession and the measured tone of language that we have missed in previous conflicts. His forbearance toward Zedekiah indicates the mellowing of the prophet's nature; and the outrages he suffered at the time of the siege, so far as we read, were endured with patience and a good courage.

From this time Jeremiah's thoughts turned increasingly toward the ideal and eternal. His gaze rests on the bright future of God's kingdom that lies beyond the present shame and misery. There he finds a harbour of refuge, like the Christian prophet who wrote the Epistle to the Hebrews under the shadow of Jerusalem's second fall; as "the day approaches" for the overthrow of the earthly Zion, the image of God's true city, "that hath the foundations," grows clearer to his soul.

Amid the horrors of the final siege, the prophet's quiet confidence in the restoration showed itself in the transaction by which he bought, with deliberation and in proper legal form, the field of his cousin Chanam'el at Anathoth. Baruch (*Barúk ben-Neriyyáh*) appears as witness, and is here mentioned for the first time. This incident is told in ch. 32, with a brief introduction explaining the situation of Jeremiah in prison at the time (vv. 1-5), and is followed by a dialogue with Jehovah on the occasion extending from ver. 16 to the end of this long chapter,[1] in which, after citing the causes of Jerusalem's imminent ruin, the Lord promises that the people of Israel will be gathered home from the lands of the exile (37), restored to fellowship with God and to union "in one heart and one way" (38. 39), and reconstituted under an "everlasting covenant" by "the putting of Jehovah's fear in their hearts" (40-42). So "fields" will once more be "bought in the land," and this purchase from Chanam'el is the pledge of happier coming times

[1] It must be noted that critics greatly question the genuineness of 32 16-44, together with the whole of 33. We are inclined to the moderate view of Giesebrecht, who cuts out vv. 17-23 (after the words, "Ah, Lord Jehovah!") as a gloss upon Jeremiah's prayer, and explains 33 14 26—a paragraph wanting in the Septuagint—as an interpolation of kindred prophetic matter made by some editor's hand.

and of Israel's indefeasible rights in her soil (43. 44). To this is added a picture of the renovated city and land, painted in colours that vividly contrast with the miseries of the present siege (33 6-13).

The above forms the conclusion of the second distinctly named "book" of Jeremiah, commencing at 30 1 (comp. 36 2 and 32), which Duhm happily designates "The book of the future of Israel and Judah" (see pp. 125–129 above). This section of Jeremianic prophecy affords a delightful counterpart to the Book of Doom that was burnt by Jehoiakim; it shows that through Jeremiah's eventide, despite its outward gloom, there shone a calm and full inward light.

There is much in chs. 30 and 31[1] that belongs to the traditional prophetic scheme of Israel's restoration and the Messianic days; ch. 31 31-34[2]

[1] Here again allowance must be made for annotations and enrichments of an oracle on which subsequent generations, still moved by the spirit of prophecy, dwelt with predilection. Ch. 30 10. 11 (an echo of Isa. 40 ff.) is wanting in the text of the LXX; so ver. 22, which anticipates 31 1. The lines of 30 23. 24 have appeared already in 23 19. 20, where they are equally inappropriate and disturbing to the context. In ch. 31, vv. 6 9a. 14. 23-30. 37-40, are put down as post-Jeremianic by leading critics, for reasons more or less convincing.

[2] His rejection of this passage is the chief blot upon Duhm's brilliant but sometimes wilful Commentary on Jeremiah. See Wilfrid J. Moulton's paper on "The New Covenant in Jeremiah," in the *Expositor* for April 1906.

is Jeremiah's best contribution to the doctrine of the Kingdom and to the progress of spiritual thought. This passage touches the high-water mark of prophecy. The significance of the promise of the New Covenant will be considered in the following chapter. We note here that the prophet had read first in his own heart the secret which he conveys to his fellow men. The mission, which for twenty years Jeremiah had struggled with and borne as a crushing yoke, the compulsion he had kicked against as a cruel goad, he has at last accepted, becoming to the depths of his nature a consecrated man and resting on the will of God, for himself and for his people, as good and holy. The Jeremiah who said, "Oh, Jehovah, Thou hast befooled me!" and who cursed the day of his birth, is long since dead; the new man has been raised up in him, who "waits to see the end of the Lord" and finds mercy shining through the darkest judgements. When Jeremiah foretells "the days coming" when Jehovah "will put His law in" men's "inward parts, and in their hearts will write it," such a joyful day has dawned already for himself; in his own breast he found a mirror where he read the possibilities and purposes of God's redeeming grace toward all His people.

CHAPTER XXVII

DOCTRINE OF THE PROPHETS OF THE SEVENTH CENTURY

Samaria and Jerusalem—Ruin of Judah delayed but inevitable—Jeremiah and Companion Prophets—General Attributes of Jehovah—His Union with Israel—Jehovah's invincible Love—Perplexity of Habakkuk—Intimacy with Jehovah—Deepened Moral Sensitiveness—Vein of Scepticism—Religion less National, more Personal—Prophet and his Mission identified—"The Heart" in Jeremiah—Root of National Decay in Personal Sin—Rejection of Temple and Ark—The Religion of the Past and of the Future—End of the Old Covenant—Jeremiah and Jesus Christ—Denunciation of Priests and Prophets—Forgiveness of Sin—Prophecy and the Nations—The Appointment of Nebuchadrezzar—Breaking down the Wall of Partition—Restoration of Gentile Peoples—Jehovah judging amongst the Nations—Judah's Evil Neighbours—Israel's Fall the Riches of the World.

THE fall of Samaria marked the proximate goal of earlier prophecy (Vol. I, Ch. XII). "The day of Jehovah" predicted by Amos and Hosea arrived when, in 722 B.C., Sargon broke

up the northern kingdom of Israel, and carried the people of the Ten Tribes into an exile that proved fatal to its corporate existence. But "the remnant of the house of Judah" escaped destruction from Assyria, and again "took root downward and bare fruit upward" (Isa. 37 31). The century of respite enjoyed by the southern principality enabled prophecy to pursue its work in deepening the national religion and unfolding the ideal of the kingdom of God. The large conceptions of God and His redeeming purposes handed down from Isaiah, were so developed and matured during the seventh century, that they served to carry the faith of the Judæan captives through the shock of political disruption and dispersion; under their influence was formed that company of the elect, the church within the people, whose first beginnings we traced in Isaiah's time (see Vol. II, p. 46), which was henceforth to be the trustee of Israel's heritage, "the holy seed" and "substance" of a nation whose political fabric was irreparably shattered.

The moral disease that destroyed the kingdom of the Ten Tribes was as deeply seated in the Judæan body politic. On the southern tribes, however, comparatively poor as they were and less contiguous with heathendom (see Vol. I, pp. 128, 129), Canaanite and foreign idolatries,

and the corruptions of wealth, operated more slowly; at the same time, the conservative traditions attaching to the shrine and throne of David at Jerusalem offered a resistance to the invasion of alien habits that was stouter than elsewhere. Zion supplied a rallying-point for the spirit of prophecy, from the time of Isaiah onwards, of indispensable value for its preservation and progress (see the concluding pages of Ch. XII in Vol. I). For all this, Jerusalem was doomed in the end to share the fate of Samaria; so Micah the Morashtite had proclaimed in the parallel he drew between the two cities (Mic. 1 5-12, 3 8-12).[1] Jeremiah took up, a century later, the strain of Micah, whose oracle of doom served to protect his successor (Jer. 26). Between the dates of Micah and Jeremiah had come the blighting reign of Manasseh, which undid the effect of Hezekiah's reforms and brought Judah to the lowest pitch of debasement. Jeremiah traces all the subsequent disasters of the country to Manasseh. The reformation of Josiah and the adoption of the Deuteronomic covenant produced little effect on the spirit of the people, and

[1] Only, as Micah himself asserted, and as Isaiah passionately insisted, Zion is after all imperishable; Jerusalem may fall, but to rise again (Mic. 4; Isa. 29 1-8, 31-33, etc.).

scarcely arrested for a generation the downward momentum. Even in Josiah's reign there appears to have been no hearty union amongst the better elements in the nation's life; prophecy had ceased to be a controlling influence in public affairs—Jeremiah stood toward the kings of his day on a footing of distance and aloofness, in striking contrast with that assumed by earlier prophets toward the rulers of their time. Prophecy is now detaching itself from the monarchy and the civil institutions of Israel. Ceasing to be political, it becomes more purely spiritual and inward.

The general doctrine of Isaiah was included in the review of "The Doctrine of the Early Prophets" given in Chapter XII of Volume I, and Chapter XVII in Volume II has been devoted to his "Messianic Teaching." Isaiah and Micah are separated from the prophets of this century by the wide gap of the reaction under Manasseh (Vol. II, ch. XVIII). Amongst these latter Jeremiah towers even higher than Isaiah did over his companions. None of the "minor" prophets of this epoch carries the same weight as Amos and Hosea amongst Isaiah's forerunners. This chapter will therefore be in the main a discussion of the teaching of Jeremiah. Moreover, Jeremiah's predecessors and con-

temporaries (Nahum, Zephaniah, Habakkuk, and the Anonymus of Zechariah 12–14), while individually of less importance, form by no means so compact a group as the minor prophets of the eighth century and have less in common with each other. It is a sign of the times that prophecy becomes increasingly individualistic, and shows fewer traces of intercommunion and of the influence of a dominant school of thought than in former times. From Jeremiah and the author of Zech. 12–14 one gathers that the organized and professional Nebi'ism had sunk into decrepitude in Judah, along with the other national institutions, and was regarded by the isolated genuine prophets of the time with disgust and contempt: it is actually included amongst the promises of Messianic blessing that "the prophets shall be ashamed every one of his vision"; and "when any shall yet prophesy, his father and mother shall say unto him, Thou shalt not live, for thou speakest lies in the name of Jehovah! . . . and they shall thrust him through when he prophesieth" (Zech. 13 2-6).

Points of contact, indeed, are not wanting between the major prophet of this time and the rest of his group. Zephaniah's ministry covered the same ground with Jeremiah's in its first stage, and is of similar tenor. Habakkuk was

contemporary with Jeremiah in the middle period of the latter's teaching; but this original and detached thinker views the rise of the Chaldæans from a standpoint of his own. The ideas of Zech. 12–14, which gather round the siege and fall of Jerusalem, run partly upon the lines of Joel and Isaiah, while they touch, on the other side, the Apocalyptic of Ezekiel; the absence of links between the writer of these pages and Jeremiah—apart from their common antipathy to the conventional prophetism—supplies the strongest reason alleged for giving him a different date and setting. Nahum, with his single theme of the fall of Nineveh, stands apart from all others—Zephaniah only touching him in a single passage; he belonged, in our opinion, to the generation before Jeremiah; Nahum's work forms a complement to that of Isaiah and a conclusion to the Assyrian era, rather than an introduction to the Babylonian era and to the prophecies of Jeremiah (see Vol. II, ch. XIX).

I. The Knowledge of Jehovah

Jeremiah and his contemporaries have nothing essential to add to the doctrine of God so powerfully developed by the prophets of the last century. Beside the *omnipotence* of Jehovah in the control of nature and of the destiny of nations

(Na. 1 4-6, Zeph. 1 2, 3 8, Hab. 3, Jer. 5 24, 14 22, 1 10, 25 15 ff.), to which these prophets give a still more comprehensive scope, His *omniscience* is realized with peculiar force by Jeremiah, who speaks of Him habitually as One "who trieth the reins and the heart" (11 20, 15 15, 17 10, 20 12, 29 23); this lends an ethical bearing to his conception of the Divine *omnipresence*, which he expresses with a new simplicity and comprehensiveness (23 23-25). In harmony with this representation, the *providence* of God is viewed as concerned not merely with the affairs of Israel and the overruling of nations, but with the protection and guidance of individual men—an aspect of the Divine government that now becomes more prominent in religious thought than hitherto (Jer. 1 5. 19 10 23 11 19 17 5-8 36 26 39 15-18 45). The *eternal being* of Jehovah Habakkuk powerfully appeals to in ch. 1 12, as the guarantee of His people's continued existence and of the final triumph of righteousness (comp. 2 3. 4, 3 17-19).

Despite the awful sentence of judgement upon his people which Jeremiah has to deliver, *the love of Jehovah toward Israel* is the theme nearest to his heart. Jeremiah was the heir of Hosea in this respect (see Vol. I, pp. 163–165). He is more distinctly so, because he cannot forget *Ephraim* and the lost tribes; he regards them

as objects still of Jehovah's yearning, destined to share in Israel's restoration, which he conceives as including integrity of national life together with fulness of spiritual blessing (3 12. 18 30 3 31). Jeremiah's profound realization of the love of God, for which his affectionate nature gave him so great a capacity, made his office as messenger of doom an anguish ; at the same time it gave to his denunciations a passionate severity matched only by that of Hosea, and which in his case is more sustained, more reasoned, and full of solemn protest. "What unrighteousness have your fathers found in Me, that they are gone far from Me?" asks Jehovah, in Jeremiah's earliest discourse (2 5). Jehovah has been a nursing "father," "the guide of her youth," to Israel ; He has proved a fond and faithful "husband" (3 4. 14. 19. 20) ; even now He wishes nothing but her return to "the love of her espousals" (3 13. 14. 22 4 1-4). He has been repaid with insolent disobedience, with treachery and "whoredom" and covenant-breaking on Israel's part, from her youth up (2–5, 11 9-14). Jehovah's anger is that of outraged love ; He is resolved on *a divorce* (3 1, 11 15-17) ; this people had been bound to Him like a girdle round the loins, but it "is marred and profitable for nothing," and must be thrown away (13 1-11).

Yet the rejection, so just and inevitable, is not absolute. In the Jeremiah of later days, "Mercy rejoices over against judgement" (chs. 30–33). Jehovah "hateth putting away," and says to His spouse as she goes into banishment, "I have loved thee with an everlasting love; therefore I have maintained My kindness to thee; again will I build thee up, and thou shalt be built, O virgin daughter of Israel"; He asks Himself, "Is Ephraim a darling son to Me? is he a favourite child? for often though I have spoken against him, I do fondly remember him still; so that My heart is in a tumult over him; I must needs show him pity—it is the oracle of Jehovah!" (31 3-9. 18-20). Circumstances made Jeremiah a predicter of wrath and ruin; at the bottom, he is the prophet of the Divine goodness, of Jehovah's unweariable and invincible love. When he puts his creed into formal expression, in the words of 9 23. 24, and tells us what he deems to be the surest and most delightful of all truths, he says, as from Jehovah's mouth: "Let him that glorieth glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth Me, that I am JEHOVAH, who doth exercise lovingkindness, judgement, and righteousness in the earth." Such is the order of God's moral attributes with this great prophet.

The apprehension of the Divine tenderness was not confined to Jeremiah in this age. Even Nahum, who announces Jehovah as "a jealous God and full of wrath," ends by saying, in words that shine with a strange beauty from his few fierce pages, "Jehovah is good, a stronghold in the day of trouble; and He knoweth them that put their trust in Him" (1 2. 7). Habakkuk's perplexity over God's establishment of the Chaldæan dominion is caused by the contradiction between the raising up of so inhuman a power and the known character of Israel's God. The intensity of this prophet's belief in Jehovah's unlimited lordship over the nations, and in His wide compassion for human misery, gives its keen edge and poignancy to his complaint: "Wherefore lookest Thou upon them that deal treacherously, and holdest Thy peace when the wicked swalloweth up one more righteous than he? Why dost Thou make men as the fishes of the sea, as the creeping things that have no ruler over them?" etc. (1 13-17).

This liberty of expostulation—such as Amos or Micah never dreamed of using—shows that the true Israel had grown into a greater *intimacy with God* than earlier saints knew. The contrast between Jeremiah and the First Isaiah in this respect is striking. God's transcendence,

the splendour and majesty of His being, fill the soul of the eighth-century prophet: in the vision attending his call, Isaiah "sees Jehovah high and lifted up"; he hears the seraphim crying, "Holy, holy, holy is Jehovah of hosts!" "The Holy One of Israel" is his habitual designation for God—an expression never occurring in the genuine Jeremiah.[1] While for the consecration of Isaiah Jehovah "sent one of the seraphim" to "touch" the prophet's "lips with a live coal from the altar" (Isa. 6 6. 7), Jeremiah writes of himself, "Jehovah put forth His hand and touched my mouth, and Jehovah said unto me, Behold, I have put My words in thy mouth" (1 9). This distinction is characteristic: Jeremiah conceives the true prophet as "standing in the counsel of Jehovah, to perceive and hear His word," like a privileged minister in the select circle of his sovereign's confidants (23 18; comp. the Deutero-Isaiah in 50 4); on the other hand, the summons that sent Amos on his errand sounded to his ears like a distant lion's roar in the desert (Am. 3 8. 9). "The word of Jehovah" that Jeremiah speaks becomes a part of himself; when he restrains that word, he feels it as "a burning fire shut up in his bones"; he has "eaten Jehovah's words," and they are

[1] This title appears in 50 29 and 51 5; but see pp. 134–137.

"the joy and rejoicing of his heart"—his delight at once and his torment, his glory and reproach (15 15-18 20 7-9).

This greater inwardness of faith, their livelier sense of God's oneness with good men and of the immanence of His word, brought with it a sore distress for Habakkuk and Jeremiah. The fact that Jehovah made them men of "His counsel," thus giving them to realize His inspiration in the humane sensibilities of their hearts, rendered the misrule of the world, the mockery of the wicked and cruel, the enthronement of unscrupulous tyrannies, more shocking to them than to saints of earlier generations. To these men God is no longer the *'El Shaddai* of the fathers, the Almighty and Inscrutable; He is, in very deed, "Jehovah, a God full of compassion and gracious, slow to anger and plenteous in mercy and truth," a God to be "loved with all the heart and soul and might." How to reconcile the revealed character of God with the actual state of the world—this was the problem! The remonstrances of these prophets indicate the deepened moral sensitiveness of religious minds in that age; in their attitude towards Jehovah one recognizes, if we may dare to say so, something of the *irae amantium*, *redintegratio amoris*—the lovers' quarrels that refresh their love!

Evil men of those times rejected the doctrine of Almighty goodness as a theorem refuted by the plain facts of life, "saying in their heart, Jehovah will not do good, nor will He do harm"—"Jehovah hath abandoned the earth" (Zeph. 1 12, Ezek. 8 12); and the best men, heartily believing it, were at times dumfounded by the discrepancy between their optimistic creed and the trend of events around them. Hence the vein of scepticism (for one cannot call it less) in the prophecy of this calamitous epoch (see pp. 55–62 above). How *modern* is this old trial of faith!

The experience of God's witnesses in the period of the decay of Judah is summed up in the lines of Psalm 73, whether composed at this time or later:

> Surely God is good to Israel,
> Even to such as are pure in heart:
> But as for me, my feet were almost gone;
> My steps had well-nigh slipped!
>
> . . . . . .
>
> Nevertheless, I am continually with Thee;
> Thou hast holden my right hand!
> It is good for me to draw nigh unto God:
> I have made the Lord Jehovah my refuge,
> That I may tell of all Thy works!

II. National and Personal Religion

Dr Duhm excellently says :

> Jeremiah is the noblest personality that Israel ever produced before the coming of Christ. . . . As a diseased and moribund people often unfolds its finest blooms just when it is perishing—as Greece in her decay gave birth to Socrates and Epaminondas, to Demosthenes on her death-bed—so we are reconciled to the hopeless dissolution of the Israelite nation, since it gives to us at this last hour the prophet Jeremiah.

In previous chapters we have already indicated the significance of Jeremiah's position in the history of his people and in the evolution of the spiritual life. He is, one might almost say, the father of experimental religion. He realized better than any inspired man before him *the inwardness* of the Israelite faith. And he was brought to this consciousness by the force of external events and the leading of the Spirit of God, concurring with the aptitudes of his own delicate and reflective nature.

We have observed that Jeremiah stood toward the national God on a footing of personal communion, of which no previous Israelite, known to us, affords the example. There are Psalms in a similar vein, which may be older than Jeremiah ;

but there is no certain proof of this. The man is identified with his mission; Jehovah's word is "in his bones." The first words of Divine revelation addressed to him declare the fact that God claimed possession of his person, down to its roots and elements: "Before I formed thee in the belly, I knew thee; and before thou camest forth out of the womb, I sanctified thee; to be a prophet to the nations I appointed thee" (1 5). His destination cuts him off from all domestic relationships (16 1. 2); he is a solitary, like Elijah and John the Baptist, but a solitary in the city and amongst the crowd. Singularly enough, Jeremiah never once speaks of "the spirit of Jehovah,"[1] as of a distinguishable mediating influence operating upon him; the objective and subjective are blended in his apprehensions of Jehovah's message, the Divine will presenting itself with a peculiar immediacy to his consciousness. Other expressions familiar in the prophets, that serve to indicate their sense of the Divine afflatus as a force coming from without upon the inspired man, are wanting in Jeremiah. He does not "*see* the word of Jehovah," like Isaiah;

[1] In this usage Jeremiah stands in contrast both with Isaiah before him and with Ezekiel after him. The post-Jeremianic passage of ch. 51 11 affords the only example of the word *ruach* in the whole Book.

nor feel "the hand of Jehovah" upon him, nor behold in any imaginative form "the glory of Jehovah," like Ezekiel; the habitual formula with Jeremiah is, "The word of Jehovah *came to* me, saying . . .": it comes, *it is there* within his soul—that is all the prophet knows! If the word "spirit" (*ruach*), with its suggestion of God's objectivity to the soul, is absent from Jeremiah's vocabulary, "heart" is conspicuous: this term occurs oftener here than anywhere else in the Old Testament, except in the Psalms—a fact evidencing by itself the supreme importance which Jeremiah attaches to personal religion.

For "the heart" is the personality, the inner and real man, with which Jehovah deals. In the maxims of 17 9. 10, which treat of its condition and its relations to God, Jeremiah gives his diagnosis of the maladies of his time: "Deceitful is the heart above all things, and incurable—who knoweth it? I, Jehovah, searcher of the heart, trier of the reins!" On this subject Jeremiah approximated to the teaching of Jesus. It is the "heart" of "the men of Judah" that needs to be "circumcised"; the "heart" of "Jerusalem" must be "washed from wickedness" and the "evil thoughts lodging within" it banished, before salvation can come (4 4. 14). Without this inner cleansing, Jeremiah was persuaded that

Josiah's reformation would fail; for it was a "sowing amongst thorns," with no "breaking up of the fallow ground" (4 3). The false prophets "speak out of the deceit" and "the vision" of "their own heart," and not "from the mouth of Jehovah"; so they promise immunity to those who "walk in the stubbornness of their own heart" (23 16. 17. 26).

Jeremiah saw with perfect clearness to the root of the matter; he traced the evils working in the nation, past all environment and social institutions, to the corruption of the individual heart, to the universality and malignity of personal sin. Jeremiah has "run to and fro through the streets of Jerusalem, and sought in the broad places thereof," to find "a man that doeth justly, that seeketh the truth"; such persons do not exist (5 1). There are those in plenty who have "Jehovah near to their mouth, and far from their reins"; but the material for a sound nationality, in honest, loyal men, is wanting. For himself the prophet can say, "Thou, O Jehovah, hast known me; Thou seest me and triest my heart toward Thee" (12 2. 3). When hope visits him, it is that Jehovah will one day give to Israel "a heart to know Him, that He is Jehovah" (24 7).

The new interest attached to personal, as distinguished from collective, religious character

is manifest when Jeremiah conceives the return from the Exile as a restoration of *selected individuals*, the men of the "new heart": "I will take you," says Jehovah, "one of a city, and two of a family, and bring you unto Zion" (3 14; comp. Zeph. 3 12. 13); he could not expect good to result from a wholesale repatriation. On the same principle, we understand why Jeremiah, and Ezekiel after him, traverse the familiar proverb, "The fathers have eaten sour grapes, and the children's teeth are set on edge": not so for the future, our prophet says, "Every one shall die for his own iniquity; every man that eateth the sour grapes, *his* teeth shall be set on edge" (31 29. 30). This protest marks a signal advance in Israelite conceptions of the working of moral laws; the common man will not henceforth be regarded, in the prevalent fashion of antiquity, as an indistinguishable item in the state with rights and responsibilities accruing to him only from his tribe—he becomes *a person*, in full status; and it is the person, no longer the nation or the clan, that is to constitute the religious unit. Not by participation in family rites or in national feasts and covenants, but by the disposition of his own heart toward Jehovah is each man's lot to be determined in the coming times.

With his fuller conception of personal religion and of the intimacy between Jehovah and the individual heart, Jeremiah consistently carried to further lengths than any before him the old contention of the prophets against ritualism. He assails the popular pride in the temple, aggravated by the Deuteronomic reforms, as a deadly superstition, since this devotion to purer rites was attended by no contrition of heart and no putting away of the extortion and vice that prey upon society—the house of Jehovah at Jerusalem, he declares, must go the way of the old house at Shiloh, for it is no better than "a den of robbers" (7 1-15). "The ark of the covenant of Jehovah," that had been the palladium of the national existence, will be forgotten in the better days of the future (3 16. 17). Sayings like these were shocking and profane to the ears of the priests and professional prophets; they provoked unbounded resentment. Jeremiah even writes as though the ceremonial system of worship formed no part of Israel's duty and was never enjoined by Jehovah, whose law was purely ethical (7 21-26; comp. Hos. 6 6; Isa. 1 13-15; Mic. 6 6-8; Ps. 50 7-15).

To take such expressions of the prophet *au pied de la lettre*, and to argue that Jeremiah condemned temple-sacrifice and priestly ministrations as intrinsically wrong and contrary to

Jehovah's mind, is a pedantic interpretation. He is putting in an extreme and paradoxical way his sense of the hatefulness of mechanical forms without inward piety, and the futility of attempting to atone for the absence of the latter by lavishness in the former; "burnt offerings and sacrifices" had at no time been the real burden of Jehovah's demands from His people. This controversy ranged all the official classes against Jeremiah. The "scribes" with their "false pen," the "prophets" with their "lying tongue," the "priests" with their pretentious ritual, "the wise men" with their crooked maxims—these upholders of a corrupt system, who are leagued against God's messenger, these encouragers of rebellion and shameless ringleaders in wickedness will, he stoutly declares confronting them all, be made foremost examples in the nation's punishment (8 8-13 18 18-23).

The entire fabric of the visible religion of Israel must be broken up. A clean sweep is going to be made of city, temple, kingship, prophetism, priestly ordinances; a complete breach is necessary in the nation's life, that the way may be clear for a fresh beginning. Israel's future career will date no longer, as heretofore, from the Egyptian Exodus, but from the restoration inaugurating a true spiritual order (23 7. 8 31 31-34).

Yet under the new conditions the monarchy and the priesthood will re-flourish, in a purer form—so Jeremiah certainly expected, if ch. 33 14-26 or 23 3-8 be his work (see p. 128). We cannot suppose that he imagined the religion of the future as altogether formless, and without its ordained representatives; he was faithful to the prophetic tradition of the eighth century, in looking forward to the re-erection of the throne of David, idealized and glorified. For the nation, Jeremiah's oracle is, "The days come, saith Jehovah, that I will raise up unto David a righteous Shoot, who shall reign as king and shall prosper . . . and this is the name whereby he shall be called, *Yahveh - Tsidqénu*" (*Yahveh - is - our - righteousness:* a play on the royal name given to the last reigning king—see 2 Kings 24 17—viz. *Tsidqiyyahu, Righteousness-of-Yahveh*). For the individual Israelite, the oracle is, "Behold, the days are coming, saith Jehovah, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah. . . . I will put my law in their inward parts, and in their heart will I write it. . . . They shall all know Me, from the least of them unto the greatest, saith Jehovah; for I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin will I remember no more."

III. The New Covenant

Despair of the theocratic state, to which the battle of Megiddo in 608 gave the death-blow, combined with the more personal apprehension of religion to which Jeremiah, and in some sort Habakkuk, was led, to bring about a changed conception of the relationship between Jehovah and the community. In Jeremiah's prophecy of *the new covenant* (31 31-34) this spiritual revolution is formally expressed. The new régime has not actually arrived; Jeremiah predicts its coming in the future. For the present his people live under the old covenant of Moses, founded at the Exodus, which in fact they had solemnly renewed of recent years in the terms of the Deuteronomic Torah,—and no sooner renewed than broken, bringing on themselves its curses in speedy nemesis (11 9-14 31 32). This gross, persistent breach of faith must be avenged, and the ancient covenant, made by Jehovah with Israel's fathers when He "took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt," has to be vindicated first, before the new constitution can be set on foot. But this will certainly take place. Jehovah will not try a second time the experiment of the Exodus and Sinai; that is a closed chapter in His dealings with men: "It

shall no more be said, As Jehovah liveth that brought up the children of Israel out of the land of Egypt" (16 14. 15), and "men shall no more say, The ark of the covenant of Jehovah, nor shall they remember it; *nor shall they miss it; nor shall any new one be made*" (3 16).[1] For

[1] Ch. 3 14-18 is marked as a *post-exilic interpolation* by Duhm and Cornill, on various but scarcely conclusive grounds. Giesebrecht conjectures that the paragraph formed part of an address of Jeremiah to the Captivity of Israel and Judah *written after the fall of Jerusalem*, in the strain of 31 27. 28. 32, which the editors have inserted as being apposite at this place. Giesebrecht bases this opinion on the similarity of language between this and the later oracle, but especially on the allusion in 3 16 (last clause, of which the true sense is given above) to *the ark as no longer in existence*; from this he infers that Jeremiah is writing after the destruction of the temple. On the other hand, ver. 14*b* seems to recognize *Zion as standing* and as open to receive returning Israelite wanderers. Giesebrecht's difficulty is very real, and his suggestion tempting. At the same time, the two last clauses of ver. 16 (italicized above) look like a gloss from the hand of some prophet-interpreter desiring to reassure Judæans of the Second Temple, who felt the loss of the old palladium. The foregoing words, "They shall say no more, The ark of the covenant of Jehovah" (a Deuteronomic phrase, by the way), imply that the ark *exists* and retains its sacrosanct character; comp. the sentiment of Jer. 7 4 and 14. There is no ground for Cornill's assumption, that the ark had disappeared *before* 587 B.C. The words "to the name of Jehovah at Jerusalem" (17), which are wanting in the LXX, may be surrendered without loss. Ver. 17 shows how impossible it was for Jeremiah wholly to dispense with a material habitat and visible form for the New Covenant dispensation.

the ark contained, enclosed in a wooden box and engraved on slabs of stone, that law which is hereafter to be written more securely on the living hearts of men.

No previous Israelite teacher had gone anything like so far as this in the repudiation of legalism; it was not until six hundred years later that the position won by Jeremiah was resumed by Jesus Christ and His apostle Paul, and that the promise of the New Covenant took full effect. The hopeless break-down of the state-religion, and Josiah's failure in the enforcement of the law of Deuteronomy, taught Jeremiah the lesson of his life; he was driven to the idea of the New Covenant, as affording the only possible escape for Israel from absolute ruin and the only conceivable way of realizing the promises made of God unto the fathers.

Under the New Covenant not only will the external symbols and guards of the old Torah disappear, but the official religious orders will no longer be needed for its maintenance: "They shall teach no more every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know Jehovah; for they shall all know Me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them." The failure of the contemporary priests and prophets in their duty was the most ominous sign of the

general apostasy: "The priests said not, Where is Jehovah? . . . The prophets prophesied by Ba'al" (2 8. 9 5 31 6 13 14 18, etc.); from these "shepherds" of the people Jeremiah experienced a relentless opposition—they met him with repeated contradiction and insult, and would have put him to death (18 18, 20 1-3, 26, 28, 29 24-32). As Hosea had said, it was "Like people, like priest" (4 9). Those who should have been the bulwark against evil, themselves "caused the people to err" and to "forget Jehovah's name," and "strengthened the hands of evil-doers." Zephaniah (see 3 4) and the author of Zechariah 12–14 (see 13 1-6) are at one with Jeremiah about this: in the words of Zephaniah, "Jerusalem's prophets are light and treacherous persons; her priests have profaned the sanctuary, and have done violence to the law." In these appointed guardians of the knowledge of Jehovah no guarantee of its continuance any more remains; since the law of God can no longer depend on "the priest's lips," it must be written on the layman's heart (comp. Ezek. 34 1-16). In his reaction against the religious orders, Jeremiah, who was himself a priest-prophet, here goes to the extreme of individualism; he appears to make each man his own priest and prophet, in entire independence of external ministrations (but

see, on the other hand, ch. 33 14-26, and pp. 128, 233 above).[1]

Finally, the New Covenant will be inaugurated by an act of indemnity, an oblivion of the sins of the past: "I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin will I remember no more" (31 34 33 8; comp. Isa. 43 25). The realization of this promise, in the "forgiveness of sins" proclaimed by Jesus as the consequence of His sacrificial death (Matt. 26 28; Luke 24 47, etc.), convinced His disciples that the days of Jeremiah's "new covenant" at last had come (Heb. 10 1-18). The prophet himself conceived this forgiveness as an experience to be realized both inwardly in the bestowal of the consciousness of personal fellowship with God, and outwardly in the return of the people from exile and the rebuilding of their desolated city: this is plain from the whole context of 31 31-34.

Jeremiah fixes no *time* for the founding of the New Covenant; he only knows that "days are coming" in which Jehovah will do this—the event is certain, and history is marching to the

[1] Superficial inconsistencies of this sort are natural in a writer of Jeremiah's temperament, and are no proof of inauthenticity in either of the contrasted passages. The inconsistency lies with the critics who reduce the sacred author to the ordinary human level, and yet refuse him the indulgence of an occasional self-contradiction.

goal. He connects its institution with the end of the approaching judgement—"after those days" (31 33); as Isaiah saw the happy reign of the ideal Son of David following on the deliverance of Jerusalem from the Assyrians, and as his successor in the exile saw the "light" of Israel "come and the glory of Jehovah risen upon" her in the approaching restoration from Babylon (Isa. 60, etc.); so Jeremiah associated his crowning vision of the spiritual union between Jehovah and His people with the repeal of the present doom falling on apostate Israel and Judah and the end of Jerusalem's captivity. From the earliest to the last days of his prophesying, Jeremiah held unfalteringly to the national hope; see 3 17. 18 for the beginning, and chs. 30, 31 for the close of his ministry.

IV. Jehovah's World-plan

Jeremiah was ordained at the outset "a prophet unto the nations." Nahum, Zephaniah, Habakkuk, and the Anonymus of Zech. 12–14, all more or less conspicuously adopt the same rôle. The Book of Nahum is a poem on the approaching fall of Nineveh, whom the prophet, in the name of Jehovah, apostrophizes from 1 14 onwards. Zephaniah, in ch. 2, delivers a series of

Woes on the surrounding peoples: he sees the scourge of the Scythian invasion about to be laid impartially on all the world-powers, along with the little kingdom of Judah. Habakkuk is troubled by the infliction of the cruel Chaldæan rule on the nations generally, and not on his own people by itself—his feelings as a man are outraged by the character of the new empire, rather than his pride as a Judæan. When the oracle is given him that revives his faith (2 4), he breaks into a taunt-song over the Chaldæan, in which he voices the exultation of humanity over the tyrant's fall (2 6 ff.). In a different spirit, the author of Zech. 12–14 surveys the array of the nations gathered under Nebuchadrezzar's standard to the siege of Jerusalem; he foresees a time when they will humbly resort thither for worship and sacrifice to Zion's God (14 16-21). Every prophet of these days was bound to have his thoughts occupied with "the nations," in whose movements Judah had become inextricably entangled; he could not but reflect upon God's plans for *them*.

In the character of Jehovah's "prophet unto the nations," Jeremiah virtually anointed Nebuchadrezzar monarch of Israel's world (25 8-12, etc.), even as Elijah was commissioned to anoint Jehu king of Israel and Hazael of Damascus (1 Kings

19 15-17). Hence he imposes submission to the Chaldæan king on the neighbour states as well as on Judah, interfering at this point in politics on the largest scale and in the boldest manner (ch. 27)—as a Pope might do in the Middle Ages! He "takes the cup of the wine of fury at Jehovah's hand" to serve it round to the rulers of the East, reserving for the king of Babylon, when "the time of his land shall come," the last and bitterest draught of the potion (25 15-31 27 7). Such was Jehovah's plan for the immediate future. It was just this plan, so announced as coming from Israel's "Holy One" ("Lo, I am raising up the Chaldæans!"), that stirred the resentment and amazed inquiry of the prophet Habakkuk (1 6. 12; comp. pp. 55–60).

Jeremiah declared all along that the Chaldæan dominion would be temporary. For "seventy years" (25 11 29 10), or three generations (27 7), it is to last: the figure 70 is doubtless to be understood as a round number—as things turned out, it approximated closely to the fact, the Babylonian empire having endured from 605, the date of Carchemish, to 536 B.C.[1] This is

[1] The "seventy years" of 25 11 is repeated seven years later in 29 10. Cornill deletes the clause containing the date as a gloss in the former passage, vindicating it in the latter. Duhm rejects, while Giesebrecht affirms, the originality of the numerical prediction in both instances.

one of the most notable of the definite predictions in Old Testament prophecy, and excited great attention in subsequent generations: see 2 Chron. 36 21. 22, Ezra 1 1-3, Dan. 9 2. Its fulfilment, probably, did much to establish Jeremiah's influence at the Restoration, and secured the careful preservation of his writings.

There is little of a constructive character in Jeremiah's teaching respecting the Gentiles. He did much, in such passages as 9 23-26, to break down those distinctions between Israel and her neighbours which rested on grounds of external privilege: man's true "glory," he says, is found in the knowledge of Jehovah, who "exercises lovingkindness, judgement, and righteousness *in the earth*," and who will with sovereign impartiality "punish" alike "the circumcised in their circumcision"—"Egypt, and Judah, and Edom, and the children of Ammon and Moab," identified in the practice of circumcision—and "the dwellers in the wilderness," who were distinguished by their cropped hair. For these formal customs—circumcision or polling of the hair—could make no difference in His sight; they have no bearing on the moral deserts of men or of nations. The prophet approves the distant heathen of "the isles of Kittim" and of "Kedar" as loyal to their worthless gods, while

the Israelites deserted Jehovah, who had been to them "a fountain of living waters" (2 10-13). This comparison springs from a larger acquaintance with strange peoples, and a more liberal estimation of them, than one finds in the older prophecy.

Hence we need not be surprised if Jeremiah (according to the Hebrew text) concludes his oracles against the foreign nations who are to come under Nebuchadrezzar's sway, in four instances—those of Egypt, Moab, Ammon, and Elam (46 26 48 47 49 6. 39)[1]—with promises of restoration "afterwards" or "in the last days." In the cases of *Egypt* and of *Elam*, these assurances may have been an echo of Isaiah's generous prediction, that Israel shall be one day "the third with Egypt and Assyria, a blessing in the midst of the earth" (19 19-25; see Vol. II, pp. 84–88); for "Elam" now represented, approximately, Assyria, which had disappeared from the list of nations. The promise of rehabilitation to *Moab and Ammon* is certainly surprising. No hope of recovery is held out to the Philistines, to Edom, Damascus, Kedar, or Hazor. The dominant note

[1] These kindly verses are wanting in the LXX, and are accordingly rejected by many critics. It is difficult to see why a later hand should have inserted them; but the Greek translator of the second century B.C. might be under some temptation to *omit* them (comp. pp. 141, 151).

of this prophet's message to the peoples is that sounded in 25 31 : "Jehovah hath a controversy with the nations, He will plead with all flesh; as for the wicked, He will give them to the sword."

If Jeremiah does not preach, with the Isaiah of the exile, the gospel of a universal redemption through Jehovah's Suffering Servant in Israel, he preaches at any rate *a universal retributive judgement*, that will visit all guilty nations along with Jehovah's unfaithful Israel. This at least was absolutely clear to Jeremiah and the discerning Israel of his time, that Jehovah is deeply concerned in the affairs of the nations; that He is "a God afar off" no less than "nigh at hand," resolved and able to measure out justice to the great powers on the Euphrates or the Nile, as to the little tribes of Israel—Asshur's overthrow had given resounding proof of this; that, in fact, He is "Jehovah, who doth exercise lovingkindness, judgement, and righteousness *in the earth*," and who "delighteth in these things." This doctrine, never before uttered in terms so large and confident, was a grand message to proclaim, worthy of a "prophet to the nations"; it was a lofty summit of faith to which Jeremiah had climbed, in days when lovingkindness and justice seemed to be banished from amongst mankind.

Habakkuk reached the same elevation when he was able to say, after his struggle with sore doubt of God's just government, "Jehovah is in His holy temple: let *all the earth* keep silence before Him" (2 20). It was Jeremiah's doctrine of the world-judgement exercised by Jehovah as Lord of "all the earth," which the Psalmists of the following age took up, associating it with the coming Messianic rule, as in Psalm 96 9-13:

O worship Jehovah in the beauty of holiness,
Tremble before Him all the earth!
Say among the nations, that Jehovah is King!
He shall judge the peoples with equity.
. . . . . .
Let the heavens be glad, and let the earth rejoice;
Let the sea roar, and the fulness thereof,—
. . . . . .
Before Jehovah, for He cometh!
For He cometh to judge the earth!
He shall judge the world in righteousness,
And the peoples with His truth!

The anger of the prophet Jeremiah had been strongly moved by the attacks which some of the border states made on the Judæans at the instigation of Nebuchadrezzar, when in the middle of Jehoiakim's reign that king first broke with the Chaldæan overlord (see 2 Kings 24 1. 2; and pp. 119, 146 above). So we read in ch. 12 14-17,

"Thus saith Jehovah against all mine evil neighbours, that touch the inheritance which I have caused my people Israel to inherit: Behold, I will pluck them up from off their land, and will pluck up the house of Judah from among them"—it seems as though the Exile was to be a sort of *deliverance* for Judah from the continual encroachments of bad neighbours! But after this general uprooting of the Palestinian states, a restoration is foreshadowed, in which the adjoining peoples will have part, —provided, says Jehovah, "they learn the ways of My people, to swear by My name, As Jehovah liveth,[1] even as they have taught My people to swear by Ba'al; then shall they be built up in the midst of My people" (vv. 15. 16). This is entirely in the spirit of Isaiah's delightful prediction touching the relations of Israel with Egypt and Asshur in the Messianic days (Isa. 19). Further than this, Jeremiah foresees "the nations coming from the ends of the earth" and "saying, Our fathers have inherited nought but lies, even vanity and things wherein there is no profit . . . I [Jehovah] will cause them to know, this once I will cause them to know Mine hand and My

[1] In the light of this oracle, and under the condition here specified, the promises made to *Moab* and *Ammon* in 48 47 and 49 6 should probably be understood.

might; and they shall know that My name is Jehovah" (16 19-21).[1]

Though the Gentiles are not expressly brought into connexion with the New Covenant promise of 31 31-34, and though in one fierce passage Jeremiah cries to Jehovah, "Pour out Thy fury upon the heathen that know Thee not, and upon the families that have not called on Thy name" (10 25: he imprecates as much elsewhere upon his own kindred!), yet he cherishes the hope that the common and searching calamity which he sees impending on the neighbour peoples along with Judah, will prove a salutary discipline for *all*. Jeremiah anticipates that, just as Israel had lowered herself by her apostasy to the level of the Canaanites around her, learning "to swear by Ba'al," so they will be lifted along with Israel into the light of the new revelation and will come to acknowledge her God for theirs also, learning "to swear by Jehovah"; they will share in the better knowledge of Jehovah, to which His people are surely to be brought in the "days that are coming."

This prophet's conception of God's saving plan

[1] The critics put down vv. 20. 21 to "the redactor." Ver. 19, however, contains the essential thought, that in the Restoration the surrounding heathen will share with Israel in the knowledge of Jehovah, abandoning their false gods.

for the nations foreshadows that developed by St Paul in chs. 9–11 of his epistle to the Romans: "Israel's fall is the riches of the world! . . . God hath shut up all unto disobedience, that He might have mercy upon all."

O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God:
How unsearchable are His judgements, and His ways past tracing out!

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